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RANK & FILE

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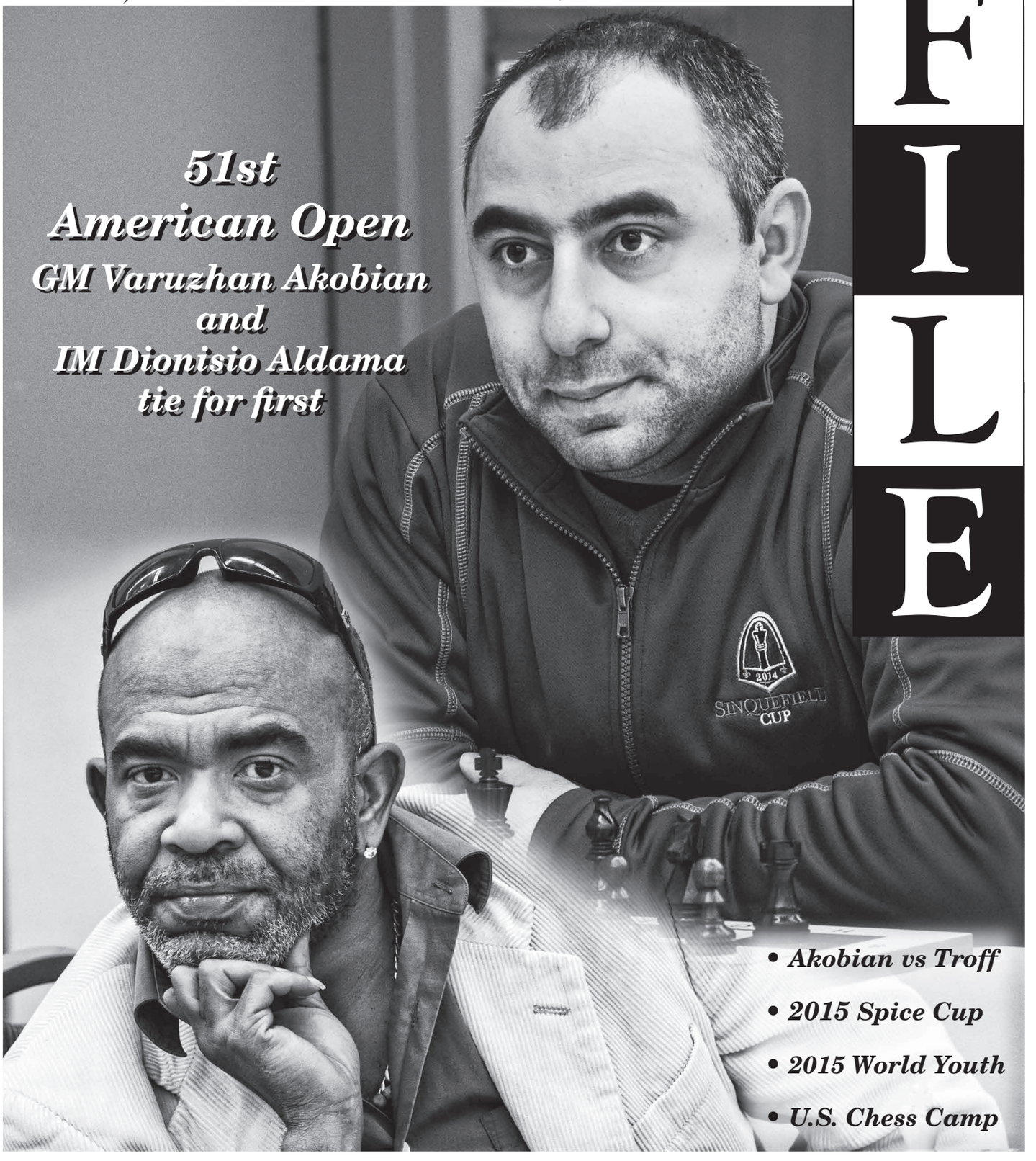


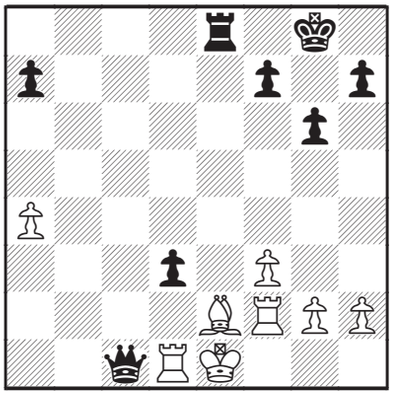
51st American Open

GM Varuzhan Akobian and IM Dionisio Aldama tie for first

- *Akobian vs Troff*
- *2015 Spice Cup*
- *2015 World Youth*
- *U.S. Chess Camp*

Inside Moves

A ***tactical warm-up***: It starts out fairly easy, but they get more difficult. Solutions on page 39. - Ed.



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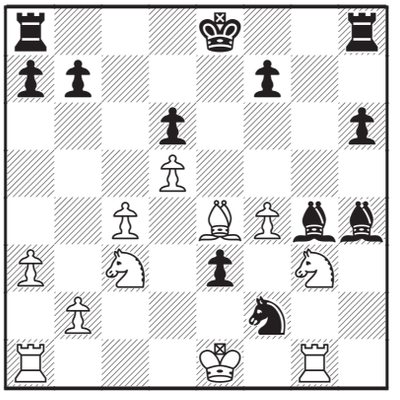

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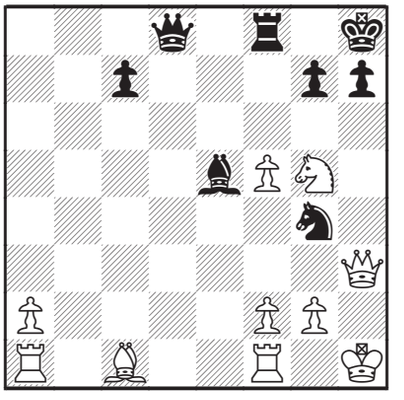

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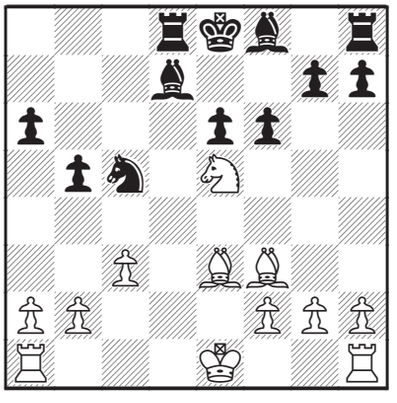

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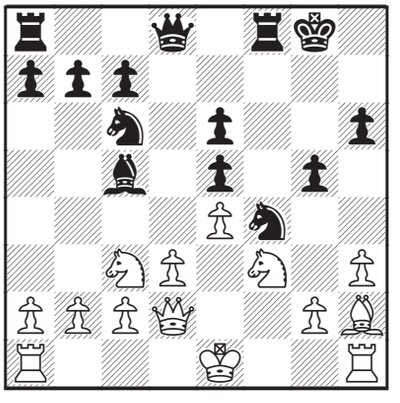
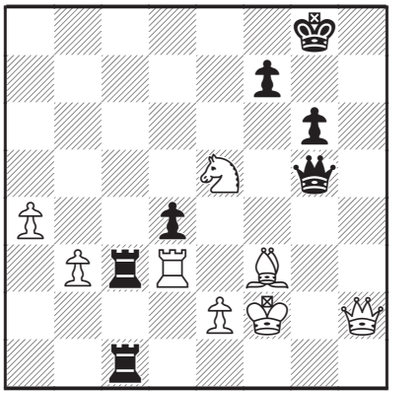


5. Black to Play



6. White to Play

Solutions to
Final Points

From the Page 39.

1. 1....Rxg5 (if 2. Qxg5 Bh2+) 0-1 Ortiz - Matikozyan, American Open 2015.

2. 1....Rxc4 0-1 (if 2. Rxc4 Nb6), Lu-Nasri, American Open 2015.

3. 1.... Bxf1! 2. Rhxf1 Rc5 3. b4 Raxa5 0-1 (if 4. bxa5 Rc4 5. Qd7 Bxa3+ 6. Kd2 Qb4+ 7. Ke3 Rc3+ 8. Rd3 Qe4+ 9. Kd2 Rxd3+ 10. cxd3 Qxg2+) Casella - Matamoros, American Open 2015.

4. 1....Rb4 2. Qe5 Rxc4+ 3. Qxc4 Qf2+ 4. Kg5 (4...Qe3+ 5. Kh4 Kh7, Kh6) 0-1 Nasri - Mousseri, American Open 2015.

5. 1. Qxf7 1-0 Quincey Yuan Wang, American Open 2015.

6. 1....Bxh3 2. Qxh3 Qf2+ 3. Kh1 Qxf4 0-1 Constance Wang - Annie Wang, World Youth 2015.

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RANK & FILE

December 2015 - January, February 2016 Volume XXXIX, No. 4

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Back Cover: Outside Shots!
They are often from inside games.

View back issues of *Rank & File* at *www.scchess.com*.

Cover photos: James Woodward

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jw: James Woodward
cr: Chris Roberts
dm: Diana Matisone
jd: Juliana Danson
cb: Claire Benoit

Positions

Correspondence Game
June – August, 2015
White: Zoran Lukic, former expert in Serbia. Currently, a Danube River boat co-captain.
Black: Wes White, former USCF expert. Currently, a part-time math professor at Whittier College.

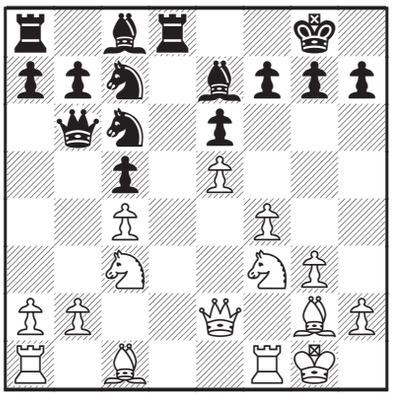
1. f4 ....
My opponent chooses Bird's Opening.

1. . . Nf6. 2. Nf3 c5 3. g3 d5 4. Bg2 Nc6 5. O-O Qc7
We have a Leningrad Dutch with colors reversed.

6. d3 e6
Also good is 6... g6 7. Nc3 Bg7 8. e4 dxe4 9. dxe4 with about an equal game.

7. Nc3 Be7 8. e4 dxe4 9. dxe4 O-O 10. e5 Rd8 11. Qe2 Nd5 12. Nb5 Qb6 13. c4 Nc7?!
I overlooked the shot 13. . .Nd4 ! Then, after (a) 14. Nbxd4 cxd4 15. Kh1 (otherwise 15 . . d3+ is crushing) Nb4, Black is much better. Or after (b) 14. Nfxd4 cxd4 15. Nd6 Nb4 16. a3 d3+ 17. Qf2 Nc2 and Black is better.

14. Nc3?! ....



A good general rule when deciding whether to exchange or retreat a piece, is that retreating has to really be superior: After a retreat it's your opponent's move, but after an exchange it's your move! Here, 14. Nxc7 Qxc7 keeps things equal. The move played gives Black a slight (-0.3) advantage according to my engine.

14....Bd7 15. Ng5 ....
Possibly premature. 15. Be3 improves.

15... g6
While 15. . .h6 looks more natural, the text move keeps the queen out of h5. It also helps prepare a later f5. As for the dark-squared weaknesses created, I am ready to bring my bishop to f6 and my knight to e8.

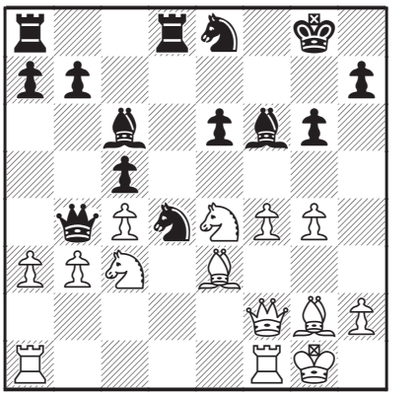
16. g4 Nd4 17. Qf2 Bc6 18. Nge4 ....
Here my opponent should just develop with 18. Be3 and allow a trade of the light square bishops, e.g., 18. Be3 Rd7 19. Bxc6 Qxc6. 20. Rad1 Rad8. 21. Qg2 with an even game.

18....Ne8
To guard the dark squares in Black's kingside. However, possibly better was: 18 . . .Qa6. 19. b3 b5. 20 cxb5 Ncxb5 21 Nxb5 Bxb5 22. Re1 Nxb3 23. Rb1, and White does not have compensation for the pawn (-.50).

19. Be3 Qb4 20. b3 f5 21. exf6 e.p. Bxf6?!
I set a small trap here, hoping for 22. Nxf6 Nxf6 23. Bxd4 cxd4. 24. Bxc6 bxc6. 25. Qh4 Rf8, and Black is clearly better (-.87). If he doesn't go for the trap, my bishop soon moves back to g7, and my position would be solid, I thought. But he has the continuation 22. Rad1 Bg7 23. Ne2 Bxe4 24. Bxe4 Nf6 25. Bf3 Nxf3 26. Qxf3 a5 27. g5 Nh5 28. Qe4 and White is clearly better (+.75). So the normal 21. . . Nxf6 was better.

22. a3 ....
Can Black take the pawn on b3 and not get his Queen trapped?

see diagram



22. . . Qxb3 ! 23. Rfb1 Qxc4
The only square to avoid capture: 23. . . Qc2 ? 24. Bxd4 Qxf2+. 25. Bxf2 and White wins a piece.

24. Bf1 ....
And now it appears that White's queen is trapped. But Black has a saving resource!

24. . . Nf3+!! 25. Qxf3 ....
The queen moves into a pin. But the other two moves, the king moves, are even worse:
A) 25. Kg2 Rd3!
AI) 26. Bxd3 Qxd3 27. Rd1 Nd2 28. Kh3 (28. Qxd2 Qxc3 wins easily.) Bxe4 29. Nxe4 Qxe4 30. Bxd2 Bxa1 31. Rxa1 Rd8 and Black is winning.
A2) 26. Kh3 Bxc3. 27. Nxc5 Rxe3 28. Bxc4 (28. Qxe3 Qd4 29. Qxe6+ Kh8 is also winning.) Ng5+ 29. Kh4 Rh3+ 30. Kxg5 Bf6 mate.
B) 25. Kh1 Rd3!
B1) 26. Bxd3 Qxd3 27. Rd1 Qc4 28. Qa2 Nd2 29. Rxd2 Bxe4+ 30. Kg1 Qxa2 wins.
B2) 26. Rd1 Ne1 27. Kg1 Bxc3. 28. Nxc3 Nf3+ 29. Qxf3 (29. Kg2 Nd2+ 30. Kg1 Nxf1 31. Rxd3 Qxd3 32. Bxc5 Nd2 and Black is much better) Bxf3 and wins. I didn't see all this! But I did like my position even if he does not capture the knight.

25. . . Qxc3 26. Rc1 Qxe3 27. Resigns. 0-1
After 27. Qxe3 Bd4 28. Qxd4 cxd4 White is two pawns down. But is the position resignable? Maybe. Maybe not.

Cy & Jack

By IM Jack Peters and IM Cyrus Lakdawala

Capablanca Memorial,
Havana 1963
Round 13 C75
Tal, Mikhail -
Letelier Martner, Rene
Annotated by Cy & Jack

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 ....

Cy: 2.Bc4 Bc5 3.Qh5 My father's move represents a literalist interpretation of the position. 3...Nc6 I suspect that some improvement can be found here, for Black's side. 4.Qxf7# Mate! Lakdawala, F-Lakdawala,C, Montreal 1968. This was my very first chess game (which should have been a hint that I had no natural ability and should have taken up some other activity, like basket weaving!). Tal tries a variant on this theme against an IM!

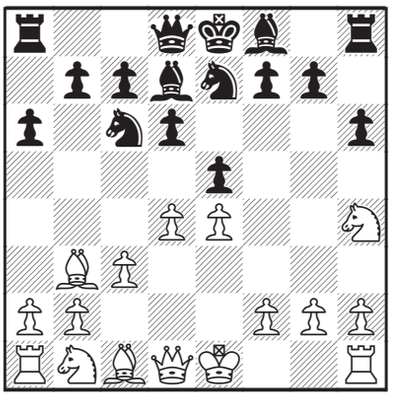
2...Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 d6 5.c3 Bd7 6.d4 Nge7

Cy: The idea can be to follow up with two potential developmental plans: Plan a) Play...g6, ...Bg7, ...0-0 and maybe later ...f5. Plan b) Play ...Ng6, ...Be7 and ...0-0.

7.Bb3 ...

Cy: Threat: Ng5.

7...h6 8.Nh4!? ....



Cy: Tal dreams an uninterpretable dream, letting go of all calculations and measurements, and just trusting his attacking instincts. The orderly sequence goes askew, and a new idea is born from the fusion of a Ruy Lopez and a Scholar's Mate!

Question: What is the point of White's amateurish-looking move?

Answer: Tal's last move - as awkward as a horse-drawn carriage attempting a U-turn on a busy city intersection - clearly feels like a derivative element, missing the position's full truth. The idea is to prevent ...Ng6, while threatening Qf3, with a Scholar's Mate threat on f7, which is surprisingly difficult to deal with. Now saying this, I don't really think Tal's 8. Nh4 is such a great move. But as we all understand about Tal's games: When an idea hangs upon imagination, rather than reality, this doesn't mean it won't succeed over the board, due to the confusion/fluster factor. Just what this postion will become is uncategorized, for the moment.

8...g5?

Cy: Disagreement flares into open warfare, as Letelier incorrectly decides this is a tempo-gaining opportunity just too tempting to pass up. This weakening thrust is an overreaction and he never does gain the expected tempo.

a) 8...g6 has never been played. It is met with the amateurish yet strong 9.Qf3! forcing Black into an awkward stance with 9...Rh7 10.d5 Na5 11.Bc2 I prefer White's position.

b) 8...exd4! I think this may be Black's best line, utilizing the principle: Counter in the centre when attacked on the wing. 9.cxd4 Now the combination (the Goring Gambit-like move 9.O-O!? fails to achieve its end after 9...dxc3 10.Nxc3 g5! I prefer Black's chances after 11.Qh5 Ne5) 9...Nxd4! Small details are a gauge for a position's big picture. This trick maximizes Black's otherwise scarce resources. 10.Qxd4 Nc6 The double attack regains the piece. 11.Qd5 Qxh4 12.Qxf7+ Kd8 Browne,W-Ivkov,B Nice 1974. Chances look about even after 13.Nc3 Ne5 14.Qd5 (14.Qf4?? walks into a knight fork after 14...Nd3+) 14...Bc6 15.Qd1! (15.Qd4?! Qg4! is a problem for White, who must submit to 16.Kf1with an inferior position.) 15...Bxe4 16.O-O White looks like he gets adequate attacking chances for the pawn, since Black's king doesn't look all that secure on d8. Still, a pawn is a pawn, and if given a choice, I would probably take Black's side.

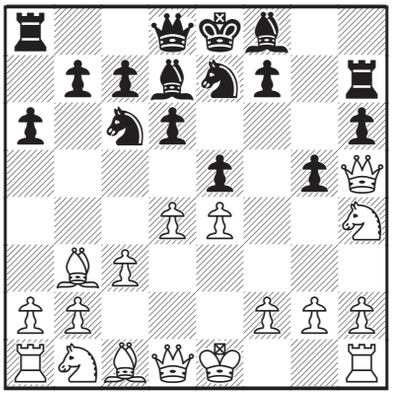
c) 8...Na5 9.Bc2 c5 10.dxc5 (10.d5? is met with the discovery shot 10...Nxd5 11.exd5 Qxh4 Black picked up a pawn and White's development lead fails to fully compensate.) 10...dxc5 11.Qf3 Ng6 12.Nf5 Qf6 Tal,M-Keres,P Moscow 1973. Tal stood a shade better, due to the d5-hole.

Jack: The earliest example of 8...exd4! in the database is Tal - Bannik, 23rd USSR Ch., Leningrad 1956, which continued 9.cxd4 Nxd4 10.Bxf7+?? Kxf7 11.Qxd4 Nc6 12.Qd5+ Be6 13.Qh5+ Kg8 . White is lost, but Tal won anyway. Tal did not invent 8. Nh4, but his affection for the move is obvious. He dared to repeat it against Letelier and Keres, despite the near-disaster against Bannik, and his 3-0 result justifies his decision.

9.Qh5! ....

Cy: My father must have been influenced by this Tal game. Let's all drop the pretense of sophistication and admit that we love to threaten vulgar one move mates! White's attack for now looks more like a band of brigands than a formal army.

9...Rh7



Cy: The only viable move to cover the threatened mate.

Exercise (combination alert): Tal found a mini combination here. What did he play?

Cy: *Answer:* Pin.

Jack: Unfortunately for Black, the attempt 9...d5 10.exd5 Na5 11.Nf3 Nxb3 allows the Zwischenzug 12.Nxe5 Ng6 13.axb3 +/-.

10.Bxg5! ....

Cy: Forward moving pieces represent a rising demographic on the kingside. This move doesn't win a pawn, but instead, strips Black's king of protection, while bringing in another attacker.

10...exd4

Jack: Houdini suggests 10...Qc8 (threatening the Queen by 11...Bg4) 11.h3 exd4 { to discourage Nh4-f5. But } 12.Nf3 +/- is still unpleasant for Black.

11.f4 ....

Cy: Tal cuts out defences based on ...Ne5.

Cy: Even stronger was 11.Nf5!

11...Qc8

Cy: Threatening to trap White's queen with ...Bg4, as well as ease the pressure with a soothing exchange, with ...Be6.

12.f5! ....

Cy: Tal gives something (control over e5) in order to get something (a clogging of Black's light squared bishop and queen, which cuts out ...Be6 ideas).

Jack: Tal always valued piece activity very highly. He's making a permanent concession in his pawn structure to temporarily restrict two Black pieces.

12...dxc3

Jack: Too greedy!

Cy: The computer suggests the inhuman idea 12...Ne5!? 13.cxd4 Nd3+ 14.Kd2 Nxb2 15.Nc3 c5 16.Rac1 when White clearly has the more promising attack.

Jack: Both of those moves look suicidal to me, but the computer's other recommendation of 12...Ng8!? 13.O-O Rg7 14.Bf4 Qb8 15.Kh1 Qa7 appeals to me. Castling Queenside would solve Black's biggest problem.

13.Nxc3 Ne5

Jack: Finally Black makes ...h6xg5 a genuine threat.

14.Bf6!? ....

Jack: Intending to eliminate Black's best piece.

Cy: 14.Be3 is also quite promising.

Jack: Yes, 14. Be3 +/- and the subsequent retreat Nh4-f3 leave White in total command. I suspect Tal overlooked Black's subtle defense to 14. Bf6.

14...Ng8?!

Cy: The right idea, but one move early. Black should try 14...Nd3+ 15.Kd2 and only now play 15...Ng8! 16.Bg5 Nc5 17.Rae1 Rg7 18.Be3 Qd8 19.Kc2 Nxb3 20.axb3 Qe7 Black castles long and the worst is behind him.

Jack: I agree that Black must play 14...Nd3+! 15.Kd2 Ng8! 16.Bg5 Nc5, but he should meet 17.Rae1 by 17... Nxb3+ (as 17...Rg7? loses beautifully to 18.Bxf7+! Rxf7 19.e5 Bxf5 20.Rhf1 Be6 21.exd6 Qd7 22.Rxf7 Qxf7 23.Rxe6+ Nxe6? 24.d7+) 18.axb3 Bg7 += .

15.Bxe5! ....

Cy: *Question:* I understand that the motivation is to eliminate Black's powerful e5-knight. But in doing so, doesn't White hand over both bishop pair, and also the dark squares?

Answer: All true, yet strategic considerations are swept aside, since Tal's move is in preparation for a coming combination.

15...dxe5 16.Ng6! ....

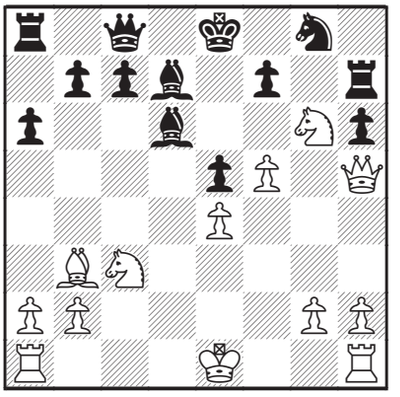
Cy: Tal could never resist such moves.

Jack: Neither could his opponents!

Cy: White can play the simpler 16.Nf3! Nf6 (16...Bd6?? is instantly crushed by 17.Ng5!) 17.Qh4 Qd8 18.Nxe5 Qe7 19.Nf3 Bxf5 20.O-O-O Black's king is in serious danger, stuck in the centre.

Jack: According to Houdini, best of all is 16.f6! Bd6 17.Qf3 +/- . White can use d5 and f5, while most of Black's pieces sit idly.

16...Bd6



Cy: We can evolve and refine an idea only so much. At one point we must implement it.

Question: How did Tal prosecute his attack?

Answer: Attraction/discovered check/pin.

17.Bxf7+! ....

Cy: Danger, which once lurked on the periphery, now steps out into the open and stares directly at Black's king. It wasn't in Tal's nature to suppress any idea (no matter how risky!), even when implementation meant the sacrifice of material.

17...Kxf7

Cy: Forced, since 17...Rxf7?? loses to the Nimzowitchian 18.Nh8!

18.Nd5! ....

Cy: Threat: Nge7+, winning the Queen. Tal spurs his horses headlong into the battle zone. Lasker's princi-

ple: The threat (of discovered check) is stronger than the execution. The d5-knight can't easily be kicked away, since ...c6?? walks into a fork on b6. Also when Black plays ...Nf6, White then exchanges, which saves his queen from a tempo loss. Tal's move is more accurate than 18.Nxe5+ Kf8 19.Ng6+ Kg7 20.O-O Qd8 when f6+ is prevented, while Black gets help with ...Qg5 next.

18...Kg7

Cy: Forced, since Nxe5+ was huge, with White's other knight on d5.

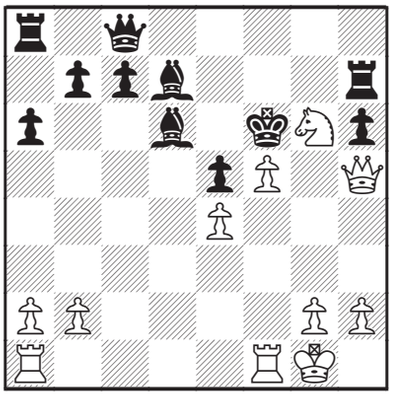
Jack: Black can't stand 18...Nf6? 19.Nxe5+ Kg7 20.Qg6+ Kh8 21.Nxf6 but 18...Qe8!? 19.O-O Nf6 is reasonable. Then 20.Nxe5+ Kg7 21.Nxf6 Kxf6 22.Nxd7+ transposes to the game.

Jack: White can try for more against 18...Qe8!? with 19.f6!? c6 20.O-O cxd5 21.Nxe5+ Kf8 22.Ng6+ Kf7 23.e5. I would call it "unclear," but Houdini claims a significant advantage of "0.80."

19.O-O ...

Cy: Threat: f6+.

19...Nf6 20.Nxf6 Kxf6



Cy: *Exercise* (combination alert): Black's position is not a good place to be if you are playing Mikhail Tal. Find White's next shot.

Answer: Clearance/attraction.

21.Nxe5! Qe8!

Cy: The only move. Both versions of acceptance are disastrous for Black:

a) 21...Bxe5?? 22.Qg6+ Ke7 23.Qxh7+ is hopeless for Black's harried king.

b) } 21...Kxe5?? 22.f6+ Bf5 (22...Ke6?? 23.Qd5# Mate!) 23.Rxf5+ Ke6 24.Rf3! (Threat: Qf5+ and Qxh7+.) 24...Rh8 25.Rd1! Qd5+, then e5 follows, and Black's king has no hope of survival. 25...c6 is met with 26.Qg4+ Kf7 27.Qg7+ Ke6 28.Rxd6+! Kxd6 29.Qe7# Mate!

22.Nxd7+ Rxd7 23.e5+! ....

Cy: Tal finds one blow after another, this time opening central lines in order to hunt down Black's king.

Jack: This is a terrific move. Instead, the obvious 23.Qxh6+? Kf7 24.Qh7+ Kf8 leaves White nothing more than repetition.

23...Bxe5

Cy: 23...Qxe5 24.Qg6+ Ke7 25.Rfe1! Larsen once wrote that whichever rook you move, will be the wrong one! It becomes apparent in a few moves this is the right rook. 25...Bc5+ 26.Kh1 Be3 27.Qh7+ Kd8 (27...Kd6 ?? 28.Rad1+ and now we see why it was correct to give check on e1 with the f1-rook, rather than the a1-rook. White wins.) 28.Qg8+ Qe8 29.Qb3! is hopeless for Black, since 29... Re7?? gets clobbered by 30.Qxb7 Rc8 31.Rad1+ Rd7 32.Qb3 Rxd1 33.Rxd1+ Ke7 34.Qxe3+ His sister's coarse, jeering laughter assaults the black king's delicate ears.

24.Qxh6+ Kf7 25.Rae1 ....

Cy: The final inactive attacker enters play.

25...Rd5?

Cy: When we linger in an inferior position, we reach a place which is neither life nor death. Necessary was 25...Rad8 26.Kh1 Rd5 27.Qh7+ Kf6 28.g4 Qg8 29.Qh6+ Ke7 30.f6+ Kd7 31.f7 Qg7 32.Rxe5! Qxe5 33.f8=Q Rxf8 34.Qxf8 Qxb2 35.Qf7+ Kc6 36.Qe6+ Kc5! 37.g5! when White should win, but must still be careful, due to his own exposed king.

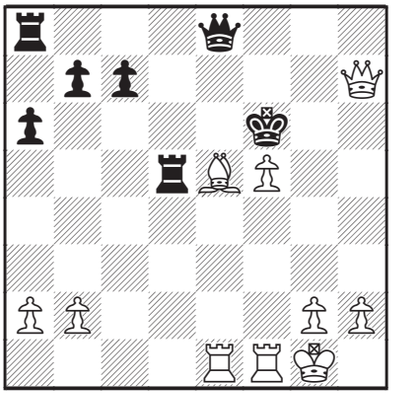
Jack: This is a plausible line, but I'm not sure of the last few moves and I wouldn't want to play either side of the final position! There should be something simpler ...

Jack: I was tempted by 25...Rad8 26.f6?? until I realized that 26...Qh8! 27.Qxh8 Bd4+! 28.Kh1 Rxh8 -+ saves Black.

26.Qh7+! ....

Cy: "Come with me if you want to live," recites the queen, who is a big fan of the Terminator movies.

26...Kf6



Cy: *Exercise* (combination alert): Find one problem-like idea and Black collapses:

Answer: Rook lift/queen trap.

27.Re4!! ....

Cy: Threat: Rg4 and Rg6 Mate!

Question: Wasn't Tal's last move a blunder? Black has the discovery combination ...Bd4+!

Answer: We must borrow from the wisdom of Howard Hughes: Just because you can't see a germ, doesn't mean it won't get you! Please see the game's continuation!

27...Bd4+

Jack: Similar is 27...Bxh2+ 28.Kh1 +-.

Jack: If 27...Qd7, then 28.Qg6+ Ke7 29.Rh4 +- shows another point of White's Rook lift.

28.Kh1! 1-0

Cy: 28.Kh1! Qxe4 Sometimes the worst-case-scenario is when our wishes are answered. In hopeless circumstances, we tend to cling to the comforting fiction that a miraculous rescue is still within the realm of possibility. Black's "saving" move is met with 29.Qg6+ Ke7 30.f6+! and Black's unfortunate queen reminds us of figure skater Nancy Kerrigan, just moments before she received the Tonya-ordered metal pipe to the knee.

Software Toolworks Ch.
Long Beach, CA 11.26.1988
Round 5 B82
Peters, Jack - Tal, Mikhail
Annotated by Jack & Cy

1.e4 ....

Cy: Your very first move is a radical departure from common wisdom, which says: If you are outmatched in a fight, you are better off running, rather than making a stand and risk getting beaten to a pulp. Of course by winning, you beat the odds and pulled off a David versus Goliath story! In my case I would open with 1.d4 play a London or Colle system and pray to the chess goddess (who is usually occupied elsewhere when I offer my prayers to her).

1...c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 e6 6.f4 a6 7.Qf3 Qb6

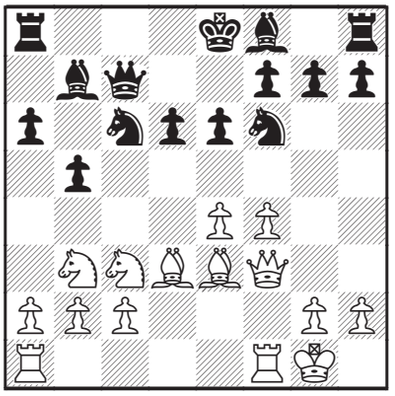
Jack: Black uses a two-step maneuver that had become popular about 10 years earlier. Now it's the most common answer in the database.

8.Nb3 Qc7 9.Bd3 ...

Jack: A few weeks later, Tal repeated the opening against Timman, who replied 9.g4 b5 10.g5 b4 11.Nb5 axb5 12.gxf6 with about even chances. Tal won.

9...Nc6 10.Be3 b5 11.O-O Bb7

Jack: I've played the Black side of this formation dozens of times, and I don't believe White can overpower Black with a direct Kingside attack. So I chose a different plan to take control of c4.



12.a4!? ....

Jack: Shockingly, Houdini approves of my over-the-board experiment.

12...b4

Jack: Forced, as } 12...bxa4? 13.Rxa4 Be7 14.Rfa1 +/- would cost Black his a-pawn.

13.Nb1 ....

Cy: ! Very nice strategic judgment, realizing that White, if given time, can set up a queenside bind with Nc4 and a5, seizing control over b6.

Jack: A few games have tested 13.Ne2, which seems less logical to me. I wanted my Knight to look toward c4 and b6.

13...Be7 14.N1d2 O-O 15.a5 .... +=

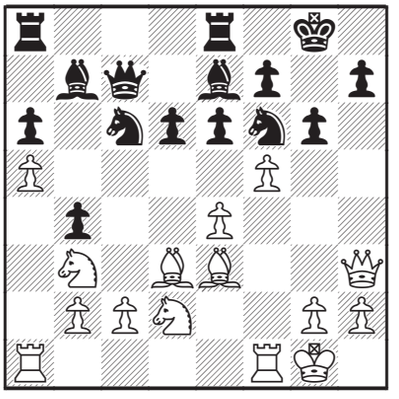
Jack: I felt that White had an edge unless Black could counter in the center with ...d6-d5 or ...e6-e5.

15...g6?!

Jack: May I call one of Tal's moves too defensive?

Jack: Black should reject 15...d5?! 16.e5 Nd7 17.Qh3, but 15...e5 16.Nc4 Rae8 is reasonable.

16.Qh3 Rfe8 17.f5? ....



Jack: Bad judgment. I realized that Black's Knight would settle on e5, but I neglected to consider that Black's Bishop at b7 and his Rook at e8 would also benefit from this impetuous advance.

Jack: Instead, the calm 17.Nf3 Bf8 18.Bb6 Qd7 19.Rae1 += waits for a better opportunity to advance e4-e5 or f4-f5.

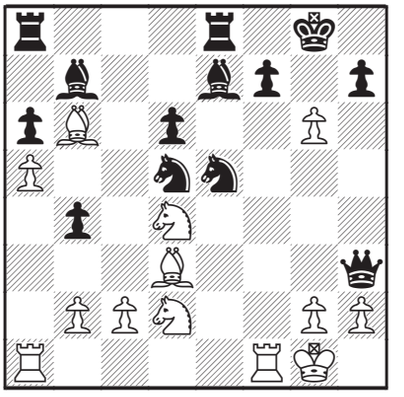
17...exf5 18.exf5 Ne5 19.Bb6 Qd7

Jack: After the game, I told Tal that I expected 19...Qc6 20.Nd4 Qd5 to put pressure on g2. He dismissed the idea instantly with a wave of his hand.

20.Nd4 Nd5

Jack: Sharpest. White's position will fall apart if Black captures on b6. I naively thought I had figured out a powerful idea on the Kingside.

21.fxg6 Qxh3



Cy: !! A spy's greatest asset is her ability to remain invisible in a crowd. An amazing idea. Tal gives up material (he never gave away anything without asking for something more in return!), sensing an endgame mating attack. He rarely took a long term view to any position, and was always willing to sacrifice or damage his structural future, if in return, he could gratify his immediate tactical needs.

Jack: I hadn't paid attention to this response because it costs Black a pawn and the Queens go off the board.

Jack: I expected 21...hxg6 22.Nf5 Bf8 23.Bd4.

22.gxf7+ Nxf7

Jack: Tal made his reply quickly, but he stunned me after the game by suggesting 22...Kh8. I thought he had overlooked the loss of the Rook by 23.fxe8=Q+ Rxe8 24.gxh3, but he had seriously examined Black's counterattack with 24...Rg8+. He thought White should defend by 25.Kh1 Nxd3 26.cxd3 Nxb6+ 27.Ne4.

23.gxh3 Bg5

Jack: Only now did I spot the threat of ...Nd5-f4xh3. In addition, Black hits the Knight at d2 and threatens

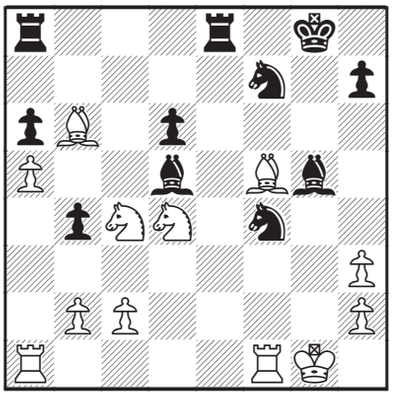
the other Knight by ...Bg5-e3+ and ...Nd5xb6.

Jack: Black's attack looks terrific. However, 23...Ng5 seems more effective.

24.Nc4 Nf4 25.Bf5 ....

Cy: The bishop commandeers f5, but it's a wobbly, unsupported post.

25...Bd5



Cy: We arrive at a make-or-break moment. Tal's once formless plan grows and assumes a visible pattern: ...Nh6 is a monster threat and it appears as if Jack's king - much like the biblical Job - is being tested by both God and Tal's minor pieces.

26.h4!! ....

Cy: When we sense we are busted, our single remaining option is desperation, and oh the joy when by a miracle, it works! Jack finds an amazing shot which overshadows Tal's threats. It isn't clear to our eyes yet, but we get a vague premonition of a cataclysmic alteration.

Jack: The luckiest and most memorable move of my career. I was reconciling myself to being another victim of a Tal brilliancy when I spotted an amazing resource.

Jack: If 26.b3?, White has no good answer to 26...Nh6! -/+.

26...Bh6

Cy: ? Now the flow of Black's would-be attack slows to stagnation levels. Having intensely studied Tal's games for my book, I came to the conclusion that his lifelong weakness (and strength!) was his irrepressible optimism--even when the evidence suggested otherwise! Tal's last move is a classic overpress, where he refuses to reconcile himself to a passive fate. His last move eats up the crucial h6-square, which denies him the (previously!) crushing ...Nh6! trick.

Jack: We spent at least a half hour in the post mortem on this position, trying to find the win for Black that we both felt must exist.

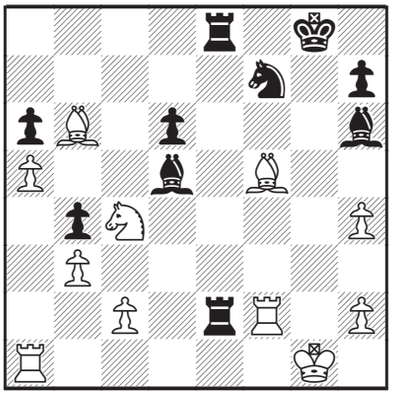
Jack: Winning the exchange by 26...Bxc4 (Cy: ! This is Black's best chance.) 27.hxg5 Bxf1 28.Rxf1 Ne2+ 29.Nxe2 Rxe2 does not appeal to Black, as 30.Bd3 Re7 31.h4 gives White all the winning chances.

Cy: I agree with you but feel like Black probably isn't going to lose after 31...Ne5. The means of Black's escape is there, and although the gap is narrow, it is possible to slip though. In any case, this is a far better chance than the line Tal entered in the game.

27.b3 ....

Jack: Now Black cannot disturb the Bishop at f5, and White's defense holds.

27...Ne2+ 28.Nxe2 Rxe2 29.Rf2 Rae8?



Cy: What was once a dull ache, now turns into a shooting pain.

Jack: This was the moment to mangle White's pawns by 29...Bxc4 30.bxc4 Be3 31.Bxe3 Rxe3.

30.Rd1? ....

Cy: It isn't easy to orient ourselves after such bewildering shifts in intent.

Jack: White should maintain a healthy Queenside structure with 30.Bd3! R2e7 31.Bd4 +-, when his pieces work harmoniously. Both a6 and d6 are targets.

30...Bxc4 31.bxc4 Be3 32.Bxe3 R2xe3?!

Jack: Black has more hope of drawing with 32...R8xe3 33.Bc8 ....

(Cy: White also gets chances after 33.Rd4 Kg7 34.Bd3 Rxf2 35.Kxf2 Rh3 36.Kg2 Re3 37.c5! dxc5 38.Rd5 Ne5 39.Bxa6) 33...Rxf2 34.Kxf2 Rc3 as 34...Ra3? 35.Rd5 +/- lets White preserve the soon-to-be-passed a-pawn. (35.Bxa6 Rxc2+ 36.Ke3 Ra2).

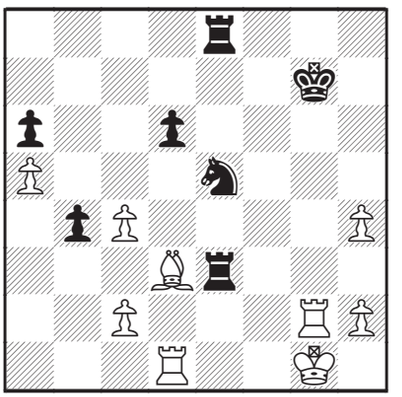
Jack: If 32...R8xe3 33.Rxe2 Rxe2 34.Rd5, Black gets counterplay with 34...Kg7 35.Bd3 Rd2 36.Kf1 Ne5 +=.

33.Bxh7+ Kg7?!

Jack: Another inaccuracy. We weren't in severe time pressure, but neither of us handled this phase very well.

Jack: Black does better with 33... Kxh7 34.Rxf7+ Kg8 += because White's pawns are so vulnerable. If 35.Ra7 Re2 36.Rxa6 Rxc2 37.Raxd6 b3, one pawn may draw against four!

34.Bd3 +/- Ne5 35.Rg2+!? ....



Jack: I still like this maneuver, although I had no idea of its consequences when I chose it.

Jack: Tal suggested 35.Be2 +/-, which Houdini considers an improvement. I feared 35...Re6. Nevertheless, 36.Rb1 Nc6 37.Kf1 keeps White on top. If Black counterattacks by 37...Rc3 (White welcomes 37...R3e5 38.Bf3 and 37...R6e5 38.Rd1 Re6 39.c5! dxc5 40.Bc4 Re7 41.Rg2+ Kh8 42.Rg5 +-) 38.Bd3 Ra3, White's pieces

spring to life with 39.Bf5 Re5 40.Bd7 Nxa5 41.Rxb4 Rc3 42.c5!, threatening 43. Rg4+.

35...Kh8

Jack: Black's King must go to the edge of the board, but 35...Kh6 is a little better.

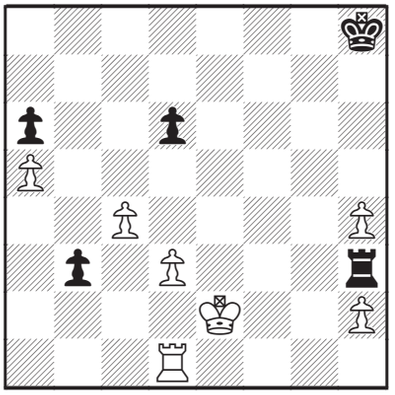
36.Rg3 Nxd3 37.Rxe3 Rxe3 38.cxd3 ....

Cy: The position's previous war cries and shouting gradually shift to a monotone of technical ending.

Jack: I was pleased that I had simplified the position and straightened out one set of doubled pawns. But the b-pawn is very annoying, and I will have to give back my material surplus to deal with it.

Jack: Not 38.Rxd3?? Rxd3 39.cxd3 b3 -+.

38...b3 39.Kf2 Rh3 40.Kg2 Re3 41.Kf2 Rh3 42.Ke2! ....



Cy: I can't imagine declining a draw against Tal, even if up material!

Jack: I was confident that I would not lose, so there was very little risk. I was determined to pursue every winning chance because I realized I would never have a better opportunity of defeating a legend.

42...Rxh4 43.Rb1 Rxh2+

Cy: When you are starving, a morsel of food is better than nothing.

Jack: Houdini suggests 43...d5!? but wrongly claims White can win with 44.Rxb3? dxc4 45.dxc4 Rxc4 46.Rb6 Rc2+ 47.Kd3 Rxh2 48.Rxa6. In fact, Black draws by the Vancura method 48...Rh5 49.Kc4 Rg5 50.Kb4 Rg4+ 51.Kb3 Rg5.

Jack: White should refute 43...d5!? by 44.cxd5 Rd4 45.Rxb3 Rxd5 46.Ra3 Rh5 47.Ke3 Rxh2 48.Kd4 Kg7 49.Kc5 +-.

44.Ke3 b2 45.Kd4 ....

Jack: Threatening both 46. Kc3 and 46. Kd5. White is winning, thanks to his active King.

45...Rc2 46.Kd5 Rd2 47.Kd4 ....

Jack: I think I repeated moves just to get two moves closer to the time control at move 60, but I may have been hesitant to make an irrevocable commitment.

47...Rc2 48.Kd5 Rd2 49.d4 Kg7

Jack: No better is 49...Rc2 50.c5 dxc5 51.dxc5 Kg7 52.c6 Kf6 53.Kd6 Rd2+ 54.Kc7 Rd5 55.Kb6 Rb5+ (as 55...Ke7 56.Rxb2 Kd8 fails, to 57.Kb7 Rc5 58.Rd2+) 56.Kxa6 Rb3 57.c7 Rc3 58.Kb7 Rb3+ 59.Kc8 +-, followed by the advance of the a-pawn or 59...Ra3 60.Rxb2 Rxa5 61.Kb7.

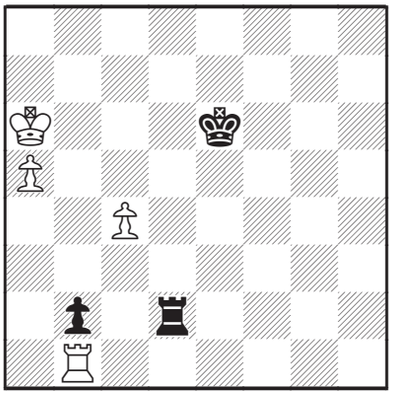
50.Kxd6 Rxd4+ 51.Kc5 ....

Jack: We will soon reach the notorious Rook endgame where the defender can sometimes defend against the a-and c-pawns. Fortunately for me, Black's King is far away and cannot yet block the pawns.

51...Rd2 52.Kb6 Kf6

Jack: Useless is 52...Rd6+ 53.Kb7 +-, as the c-pawn will run.

53.Kxa6 Ke6



Jack: Black can capture the c-pawn by 53...Ke5 54.c5 Kd5 55.Kb6 Rc2 56.a6 Rxc5, but White wins anyway with 57.a7 Rc8 58.Kb7 +-.

54.Kb7?! ....

Jack: A futile attempt to keep Black's King away from the action.

Jack: Instead, I could have shortened the game by the precise sequence 54.c5! Kd7 55.Kb7! Rc2 (no better is 55...Rd5 56.c6+ Kd6 57.Rxb2 +-) 56.a6 Rxc5 57.a7 □ (avoiding the pitfall 57.Rxb2?? Rc7+ □ 58.Kb6 Rc6+ 59.Kb5 (or 59.Ka5 Rc5+ 60.Kb4 Rc8, when Black draws) 59...Kc7 □ 60.a7 Rb6+ □ 61.Kc5 (not 61.Ka5?? Rxb2) 61...Ra6, drawing) 57...Rc7+ 58.Kb6 Rc6+ 59.Kb5 Rc8 60.Rxb2 +-.

54...Rd7+ 55.Kc6 Rd6+ 56.Kc5 Kd7

Jack: Against } 56...Ra6, simplest is 57.Rxb2 Rxa5+ 58.Kb6 Ra1 59.c5 +-. White will soon reach the Lucena position by 59...Kd7 60.Kb7 Rc1 61.Rd2+ Ke7 62.c6 Rb1+ 63.Kc8 .

57.Rxb2 ....

Jack: White wins in 35 moves, according to the endgame tablebase. It's still not easy!

57...Rh6

Cy: Tal fights with a sense of renewed purpose. He would have a theoretical draw, if only his king were not cut off from the a-file.

Jack: Even 57...Rc6+ won't save Black. After 58.Kb5 Rh6 59.Rg2, White threatens 60. Rg7+, and 59... Rh7 60.Kb6 +- prevents Black from getting his King in front of the pawns.

Jack: The tablebase recommends 57...Rc6+ 58.Kb5 Rc8 as toughest, but White wins anyway with 59.Rd2+ ! Kc7 60.Rh2 Rb8+ 61.Kc5, as Black's King will be forced to the back rank.

58.Rb7+ Kc8 59.Rg7 ....

Jack: It's almost impossible to learn all the nuances of this endgame, but there is one handy guideline: when you can confine the defender's King to the back rank, you can force a win.

59...Rh5+ 60.Kb6 Rh6+ 61.Kb5 Rh1 62.a6?! ....

Jack: Surprisingly, White wins more easily by keeping the pawn on a5.

Jack: The correct 62.c5! Rb1+ 63.Kc6 Kb8 64.Rg8+ Ka7 65.Kd6! plans to advance the c-pawn. Then 65...Rd1+

66.Kc7 Rh1 (if 66...Ka6 67.c6 Kxa5, one simple method is 68.Ra8+ Kb5 69.Kb7 +-) 67.c6 Rh7+ 68.Kc8 reaches a position that would be drawn without the a-pawn, as Black would play ...Ka7-b6. Here, though, the c-pawn will promote after 68...Rf7 69.c7 Rh7 70.Kd8.

62...Kb8 63.c5 Rb1+ 64.Kc6 Rh1

Jack: White must work harder to refute 64...Ra1. He only draws with 65.Rg8+?? Ka7 66.Kd7 Rd1+ 67.Kc7 Rh1 68.c6 Rh7+ 69.Kc8 Kb6.

Jack: To prove the win, White must find 64...Ra1 65.Rb7+ □ Ka8 (White does not mind 65...Kc8 66.Kb6 Rb1+ 67.Ka7 Rc1 because 68.Rh7 anticipates 68...Rxc5 69.Kb6 Rc1 70.Rh8+ Kd7 71.a7 +-) 66.Rd7 □ Rxa6+ 67.Kc7 Rh6 68.c6 Ka7 69.Kc8+ □ Kb6 70.c7 □ Kc6 71.Kb8 □ Kxd7 72.c8=Q+ Ke7, when the tablebase demonstrates a win in 25 moves, beginning with 73.Kc7.

65.Rb7+ ....

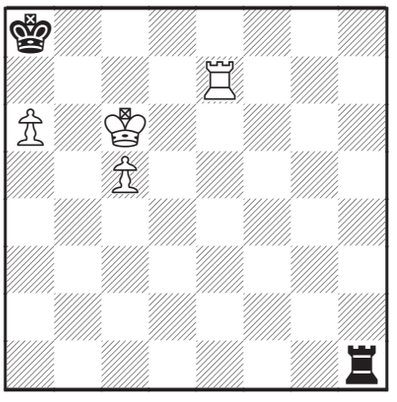
Jack: I wanted to play a couple of safe moves to reach adjournment, where I could work out the precise winning sequence.

Jack: Most efficient is 65.Rd7.

65...Ka8

Jack: Worse is 65...Kc8 66.Rb2 +-.

66.Re7 ....



Jack: This was the final move of the morning session. Black sealed his reply, and the game resumed around 10 p.m., when each of us completed our afternoon games. An experienced master told the TD that the game was a certain draw, and therefore Tal and I should be paired as if we had drawn. Bent Larsen ended the argument by confidently asserting, "It is a win." My most vivid memory of my next-round loss to Yehuda Grunfeld is that Tal came by my board every few minutes, his face looking more and more agonized as my position deteriorated. He suffered at least as much as I did!

Cy: Your loss to Grunfeld was probably because you expended a superhuman amount of energy winning this one!

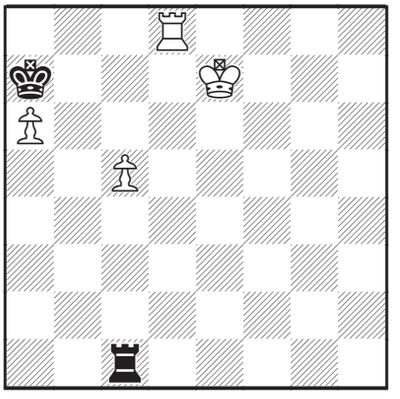
66...Kb8 67.Rb7+ Ka8 68.Rd7! Kb8 69.Kd5! Rd1+

Jack: Black puts up less resistance by 69...Ra1 70.c6 Rxa6 71.Kd6 +- or 69...Rh5+ 70.Kc4 Rh1 71.c6 +-.

70.Ke6 Re1+ 71.Kd6 Rd1+ 72.Ke7 Rc1

Jack: After 72...Re1+ 73.Kd8 Rc1, the winning path is narrow. White must find 74.Rd5 Ka7 75.Kc7 □ (as 75.Kd7?? Kxa6 76.c6 Kb6 draws) 75...Kxa6 (no better is 75...Rh1 76.Rd6! +-) 76.Rd6+ □ Ka7 77.c6 □ Rh1 78.Kc8 □ Rh8+ 79.Rd8 □ Rh6 (the stalemate trap 79...Rh7 80.Rd7+ Ka8 fails because of 81.Kc7 Rh1 82.Rd5 Ra1 83.Kb6 Rb1+ 84.Rb5 +-) 80.c7 Rh7 81.Re8 (intending 82. Kd8) 81...Kb6 82.Re6+ Ka7 83.Kd8 +-.

73.Rd8+! Ka7



Jack: White relies on 73...Kc7 74.a7 Re1+ 75.Kf6 +-.

74.Kd6 □ ....

Cy: White's a-pawn doesn't matter. Black is unable to impede the passed c-pawn's course.

74...Rd1+

Jack: After 74...Rh1 75.c6 □ Rh6+ 76.Kc5 Rh5+ 77.Rd5 Rh1, White has several ways to win, but each requires a surprising move or two. Probably the most direct continuation is 78.c7 Rc1+ 79.Kd6 Kb6 80.Rb5+ □ Kxb5 81.a7 +-.

75.Kc7 Rh1 76.c6 Rh2

Jack: White welcomes 76...Kxa6 77.Ra8+ Kb5 78.Kb7 +-.

Jack: Trickier is 76...Rh7+ 77.Rd7 (White is not ready for 77.Kc8?? because 77...Kb6 draws) 77...Rh8 78.Rd1 Rh7+ 79.Kc8, when 79...Kb6 80.a7 □ forces the win: 80...Rxa7 81.Kb8 □ Rh7 82.c7 □ Rxc7 83.Rb1+ Kc6 84.Rc1+ □.

77.Kc8 Rh7

Jack: After 77...Kxa6 78.c7 +-, White will move his King to b8 or d7 to make way for the pawn.

Jack: White refutes the alternative 77...Kb6 78.c7 Rh7 by 79.Rd6+ Ka7 80.Rc6 +-.

78.c7 1-0

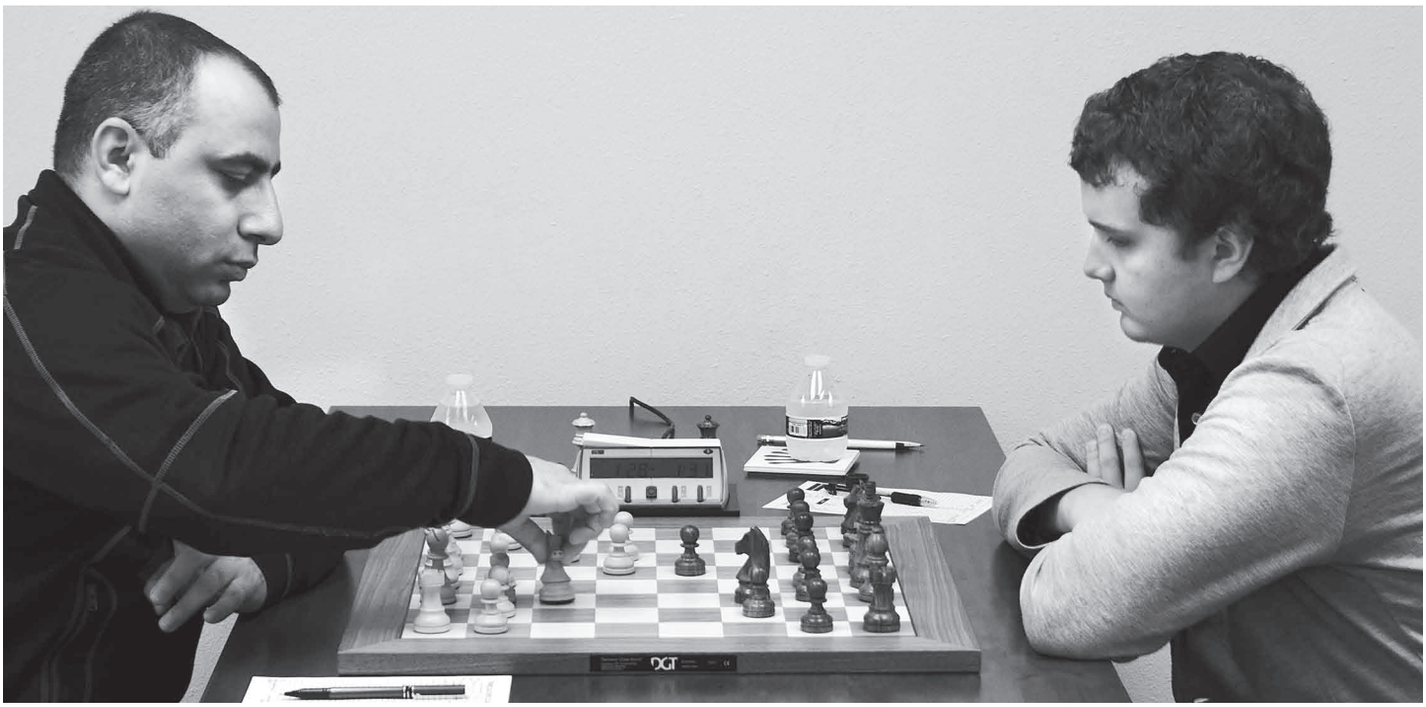
Jack: Also good is 78.Rd7+ Ka8 79.c7, as long as I don't fall for 79.Rxh7?? With 78.c7, I planned 78...Rg7 79.Re8 Kb6 80.Re6+ Ka7 81.Kd8 Rg8+ 82.Re8 +-.

Tal was a very pleasant opponent who showed no irritation at this unfortunate loss. We analyzed together for about an hour. He gave a simultaneous exhibition at the Santa Monica Bay Chess Club two days later. I didn't attend, but I heard a story that shows his sense of humor. Just before the simul, someone asked him if he expected to lose any games. He made a show of peering at the audience, then joked, "I don't see Jack Peters. No!"

Cy: I was a witness to this game and at the moment Tal resigned, I looked at the normally stoic Jack, who was grinning, like an eight-year-old who is told that school is let out early today.

GM's Akobian vs. Troff Match

By National Master Scott Roods
of the Temecula Chess Club



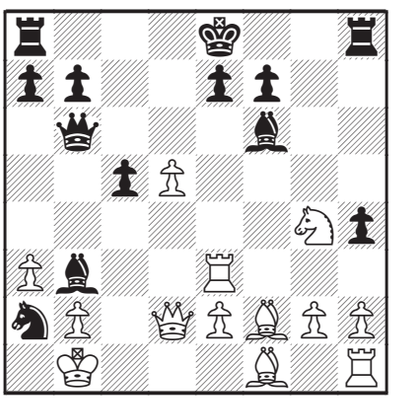
The Akobian – Troff match held at the Temecula Chess Club on October 5th and 6th was organized by co-founders Guy Reams and Shawn O'Connor, of the Temecula Chess Club, located in Southern California, and arbitrated by William Broich of Iowa. The match was 4 rounds with a time control of G90 with an increment of 30 seconds per move. The match was broadcast live on the Internet Chess Club, Twitch, Chess Bomb, and Chess24.

The match proved to be an exciting clash of Grandmasters with Varuzhan Akobian rated 2635 FIDE, a consummate positional player of the Petrosian School of Chess and Kayden Troff rated 2598 FIDE, a rising star of the Kasparov Chess Foundation.

The first round saw GM Akobian essay the Stockholm variation of the Gruenfeld Defense. GM Troff played the most popular response with 4…Ne4 and continued with 8…c5 into rarified territory, following a game of Salo Flohr from 1939. Akobian deviated from that game with 9.d5. Interestingly, following a game played by his friend Melik Khachiyan in 2000, who played the Black pieces! Melik played 9…Nd7 but Troff tried 9...Bd7 attempting to route the knight to the queenside via a6-b4. This led to interesting play by Troff who sacrificed a central pawn and played somewhat ambitiously on the kingside with pawn advances that froze Akobian's pieces. White had a proud pawn center to show for it, even if a bit overextended. With White's pieces somewhat subdued, Troff launched an attack on the White King. Akobian tried a desperate bid for counterplay with 20.Rc3, objectively not the best move, but it gave Troff plenty to think about. Troff played accurately for 4 moves until he let his advantage slip away with the tricky 24…Bg5. Instead, remaining on the long diagonal with 24...Bd4 would have been more logical. After a further inaccuracy of 27…Rh5, Akobian was able to liberate his light squared bishop and maintain a winning position to the end. A very exciting start to the match!

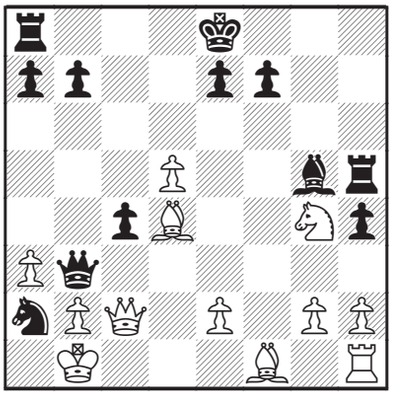
Akobian – Troff
Round One D80
10.05.2015

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 d5 4. Bg5 Ne4 5. Nxe4 dxe4 6. Qd2 Bg7 7. O-O-O h6 8. Bf4 c5 9. d5 Bd7 10. f3 g5 11. Bg3 Na6 12. fxe4 Qb6 13. e5 h5 14. Nf3 h4 15. Bf2 g4 16. Ne1 Nb4 17. Kb1 Ba4 18. Rc1 Bb3 19. a3 Na2 20. Rc3 Bxe5 21. Re3 Bf6 22. Nd3 Bxc4 23. Ne5 Bb3 24. Nxg4 ....



24...Bg5
24... Bd4.

25. Rxb3 Qxb3 26. Qc2 c4 27. Bd4 Rh5



The computer gives 27.... O-O as equal.

28. e3 Rc8 29. Qxb3 ....
Computer likes 29.Be2 much more.

29.... cxb3 30. Bb5+ Kf8 31. Ba4 Rc2
31...h3!?

32. Bxb3 Rxg2 33. h3 Rg3 34. Kxa2 f5 35. Rf1 f4 36. exf4 Bh6 37. Rc1 Ke8 38. Rc8+ Kd7 39. Rh8 Bg7 40. Rxh5 Bxd4 41. Ne5+ Kc7 42. Rxh4 Rg2 43. Nd3 Rd2 44. Bc4 a6 45. a4 1-0

Troff fired back with the Harrwitz Attack in round two and played 6.a3. Although not as popular as 6.e3, it was played by Carlsen against Anand in Moscow in 2009. Anand tried 6…b6 in that game, and played with hanging pawns. Akobian took a page from Aronian's playbook against Gelfand in Wijk aan Zee, 2012, using a stonewall formation and redeploying his knights to meet the threat of 7.Nb5 first and then heading to the e4 square and avoiding his knights having to compete for the same squares. Akobian later sac'd a pawn for nice piece activity and after the exchange of queens the players soon agreed to a draw.

Troff – Akobian
Round Two D37
10.05.2015

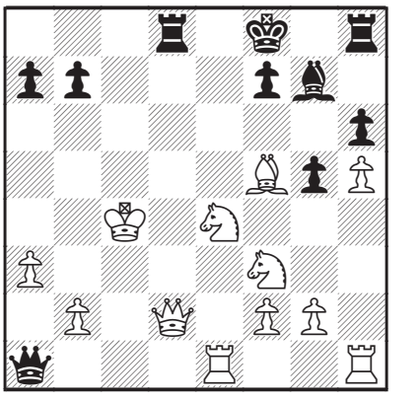
1. d4 e6 2. c4 d5 3. Nf3 Nf6 4. Nc3 Be7 5. Bf4 O-O 6. a3 Nbd7 7. Nb5 Ne8 8. e3 c6 9. Nc3 f5 10. h4 Nd6 11. Qb3 Kh8 12. Bd3 Ne4 13. Qc2 Ndf6 14. Ne5 c5 15. dxc5 Bxc5 16. cxd5 Nxc3 17. Qxc3 b6 18. dxe6 Bxe6 19. Bc4 Ne4 20. Qd3 Bxc4 21. Qxd8 Rfxd8 22. Nxc4 b5 23. Ne5 Rd5 24. O-O Be7 25. Rfd1 1/2-1/2

Akobian kept his Stockholm variation against Troff's Gruenfeld but switched to another line with 6.cxd5 that he played against E. Hansen in Las Vegas in 2010. In that game he played 10.Qf4, but in this game he dusted off an old game played by Kortschnoj – Bilek, Hamburg, 1965. Bilek played 12…Qe7 but Troff tried 12…Qd6 instead and got tempo'd by Varuzhan's knight and retreated to e7 anyway. Bilek's Rh8 was out of play in that game but somehow Troff made it work in this game by attacking without it!

Akobian made sure to get his pieces in play in this game, but Troff bided his time and maneuvered his Queen to a battery with Qd6-a6-c4 that put tremendous pressure on Akobian's King. Kayden followed with a nice piece sacrifice with 24…cxd4. Some inaccuracies occurred by both sides and on 23.Ke3, Varuzhan could have calmly walked away from the attack. Instead he took Troff's bishop and allowed the attack to flare anew resulting in a very entertaining King hunt by the young GM.

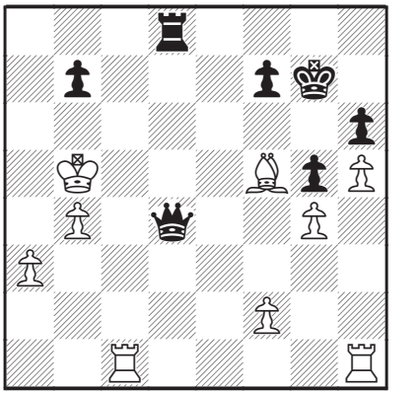
Akobian – Troff
Round Three D91
10.06.2015

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 d5 4. Nf3 Bg7 5. Bg5 Ne4 6. cxd5 Nxg5 7. Nxg5 e6 8. Qd2 exd5 9. Qe3+ Kf8 10. h4 h6 11. Nf3 c6 12. O-O-O Qd6 13. Qd2 Be6 14. e4 dxe4 15. Nxe4 Qe7 16. Re1 Nd7 17. Kb1 Rd8 18. Bd3 c5 19. h5 g5 20. Ng3 Qd6 21. Bf5 Bd5 22. Ne4 Qa6 23. a3 Qc4 24. Bxd7 cxd4 25. Bf5 Qa2+ 26. Kc1 Qa1+ 27. Kc2 d3+ 28. Kxd3 Bc4+ 29. Kxc4 ....



29. Ke3 Rxd2 30. Nexd2 Qxb2 31. Nxc4 Qc3+ 32. Bd3 b5 33. Ncd2 Qxa3.

29... Qa2+ 30. b3 Rxd2 31. Nfxd2 Qc2+ 32. Kb4 a5+ 33. Kxa5 Bc3+ 34. Nxc3 Qxc3+ 35. Kb5 Qxd2 36. g4 Kg7 37. Rc1 Qd5+ 38. Kb4 Qd4+ 39. Kb5 Rd8 40. b4 ....



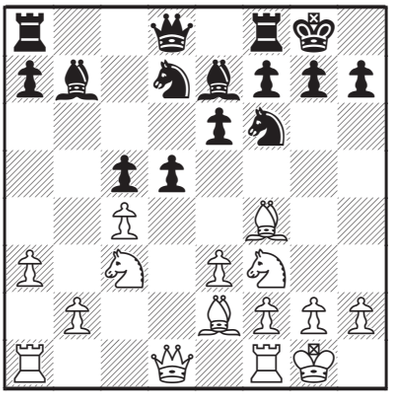
40. Rc5
40.... Qd5+ 41. Kb6 Rd6+ 42. Ka7 Ra6+ 43. Kb8 Qd8+ 44. Rc8 Qd6+ 45. Rc7 Rc6 0-1

The match was up for grabs and Kayden essayed the Harrwitz Attack again. Varuzhan deviated from round two by playing 6…b6. This is good match strategy in order to avoid or mitigate preparation. The game remained in GM praxis following Piket,J -Ljubojevic,L, Monte Carlo 1997. Ljubojevic played 10…Nc6, but Akobian opted for 10…Nbd7. On 13... Nd5, Akobian took on an isolated c-pawn for very good piece play, the severity of which was later exacerbated by Troff's somewhat timid 17.Nd2. A bit of a surprise for Troff was 18…

Nc3 when the natural 19.Rc3 failed to 19…Bg2! when Black penetrates favorably with Rb2. Although Akobian used his c-pawn to further restrict White, still the game was objectively even. Troff's trade of his bishop for Black's centralized knight was somewhat debatable and the developing move 21.Rfd1 was probably best. Akobian used his f-pawn as a battering ram along with his bishops to crash through the White defenses winning the game and the match.

Troff – Akobian
Round Four D37
10.06.2015

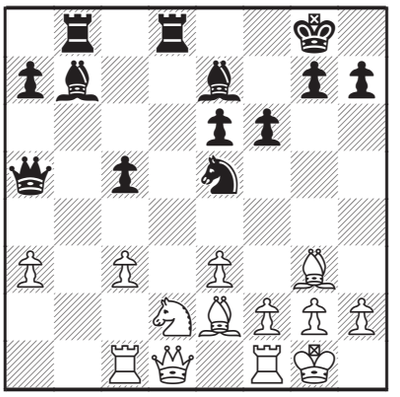
1. d4 e6 2. c4 Nf6 3. Nf3 d5 4. Nc3 Be7 5. Bf4 O-O 6. a3 b6 7. e3 c5 8. dxc5 bxc5 9. Be2 Bb7 10. O-O Nbd7



10...Nc6 11.cxd5 exd5 12.Rc1 Rc8 13.Qa4 d4 14.Rfd1 Qb6 15.Nb5 Rfd8 16.exd4 a6 17.Bc7 Rxc7 18.Nxc7 Qxc7 19.dxc5 Rxd1+ 20.Qxd1 a5 21.Nd4 Ne4 22.Bf3 Nxd4 23.Bxe4 Qf4 24.c6 Ne2+ 25.Kf1 Ba6 26.c7 Nxc1+ 27.Kg1 Qxc7 0-1 Piket,J (2640)-Ljubojevic,L (2570) Monte Carlo 1997.

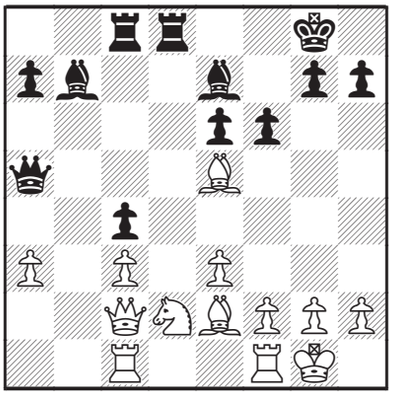
11. Rc1 Qb6 12. Na4 Qa5 13. cxd5 Nxd5 14. Bg5 f6 15. Bh4 Rfd8 16. Nc3 Rab8 17. Nd2 Ne5 18. Bg3 Nxc3 19. bxc3 ....

see diagram



19.Rxc3 Bxg2 20.Kxg2 (20.Bxe5 fxe5 21.Kxg2 Rxb2) 20...Rxb2.

19.... c4 20. Qc2 Rbc8 21. Bxe5 ....



21. Rfd1.

21.... Qxe5 22. Rb1 Bd5 23. Nf3 Qe4 24. Qa4 f5 25. Rfe1 f4 26. exf4 Bc5 27. Rbd1 Qxf4 28. Nd4 Qg5 29. Bf1 Rf8 30. Re2 e5 31. Nf5 Qxf5 32. Rxd5 Bxf2+ 33. Kh1 Bb6 0-1

Match Result:
GM Akobian 2 ½ - GM Troff 1 ½

The Temecula Chess Club was founded in 2014 and is a premier non-profit chess club.

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Suite 213,
Temecula Ca 92591

http://www.temeculachess.com/

2016 All-America Chess Team Announced

By US Chess November 12, 2015

(Crossville, TN) The United States Chess Federation (US Chess) is pleased to announce the 2016 All-America Chess Team sponsored by Trophies Plus. Team members will be presented with their team jackets and plaques at the 2015 National K-12 Grade Championship to be held December 4th through the 6th in Lake Buena Vista, Florida at the Disney's Coronado Springs Resort.

The All-America Chess Team was created in 1987 to honor the very best players ages 18 and under. The team, one of the highest national honors attainable by a young chess player, is selected on the basis of age, rating, and activities during that year, similar to the selection process of "all conference" sports teams. This year's candidates were selected based on their age as of January 1, 2015, and their peak post-tournament rating from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015. Since this award is a "post-season" selection, the minimum rating limits in each age group are reviewed annually by the US Chess staff and the US Chess Scholastic Council.

The All-America Chess Team is sponsored by Trophies Plus of Tempeton, Iowa. Trophies Plus has sponsored the team since 2004. In addition to the support provided for this award, Jim Jensen, owner of Trophies Plus, provides trophies for national tournaments as well as post-tournament trophy shipping. The US Chess is proud to have Trophies Plus as a part of scholastic chess by sponsoring this year's All-America Team. You can visit Trophies Plus at their website: www.trophiesplus.com or call them at 800.397.9993.

continued on Pg. 17

2015 Spice Cup

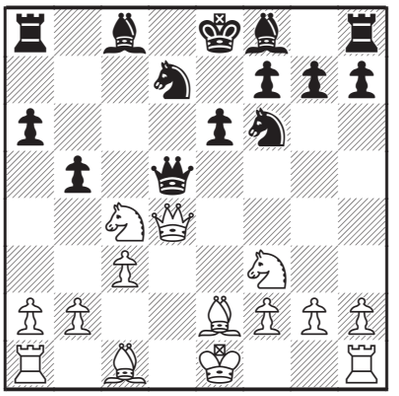
The 2015 SPICE Cup Open, sponsored by Webster University and the Susan Polgar Foundation, took place from October 17-22 at the Crowne Plaza Clayton Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri, USA. The nine round tournament had 45 players, nine of whom were rated over 2600, and five players from California. Liem Le (MO) took first with 7/9. Keaton Kiewra finished 10th with 5.5/9. Michael Brown, Konstantin Kavutskiy and Eugene Yanayt all finshed with 5/9.

Spice Cup
10.19.2015 B22
Round 4
Kiewra, Keaton - Robson, Ray
Annotated by Keaton Kiewra

1.e4 c5 2.c3 ....
When playing the highest rated opponent you've ever faced it's always a good idea to play an opening you've never played before. Okay, just kidding. I had some leftover preparation from another game that I wanted to use here. I thought this would be a great opportunity to use it because Ray Robson tends to consistently play 2...Nf6 against this Alapin system, which allows for deep preparation.

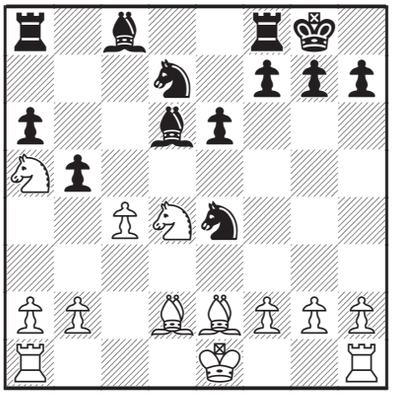
2...d5
Ugh, why do I ever think I can outprep these guys? I should have just played the London System like I did last game. My opponent clearly smelled a rat and opted for a line that according to the database he has never played before. In fact after move 2 we are already in a position where neither of us has any tournament game experience!

3.exd5 Qxd5 4.d4 Nf6 5.Nf3 e6 6.Na3 a6 7.Nc4 Nbd7 8.Be2 cxd4 9.Qxd4 b5



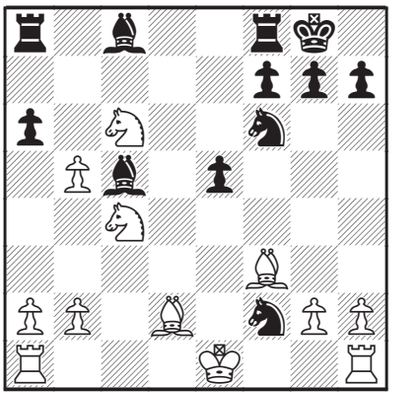
So far we have both been making theoretical moves, albeit not all of the most common ones. Black's last move is quite rare since normally he doesn't want to kick the Knight into a5 so early.

10.Na5 Bd6 11.Bd2 O-O 12.c4 Qxd4 13.Nxd4 Ne4!



Allowing the pin after Bf3 is risky, but Ray Robson has never been one to shy away from complications. This is objectively the best move and certainly the best way for Black to create winning chances.

14.Bf3 Ndf6 15.cxb5 e5 16.Nc4 Bc5 17.Nc6 Nxf2?

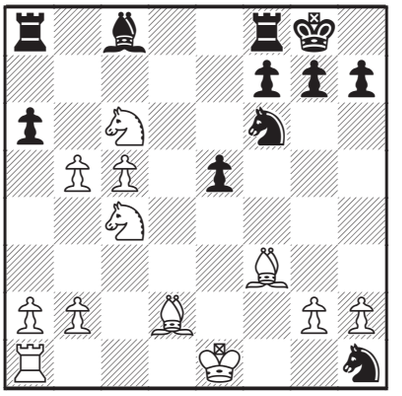


I've definitely felt like I'm facing a 2700 player so far since all of Black's moves have been pin point accurate and put me under maximum pressure. Black's incredibly natural last move though is a bit of a slip up that allows White a nice resource. 17... Nxd2 18.Nxd2 e4 19.Be2 e3 should give Black the slightly favorable game.

18.b4! ....
Turning the tide! Black now has to part with his dark squared Bishop, taking the sting out of his attack.

18...Nxh1
18...Nd3+ 19.Ke2+/-.

19.bxc5 ....



Let's assess this messy position now that the dust has settled. For the price of a mere exchange White now has the Bishop pair, strong Queen-

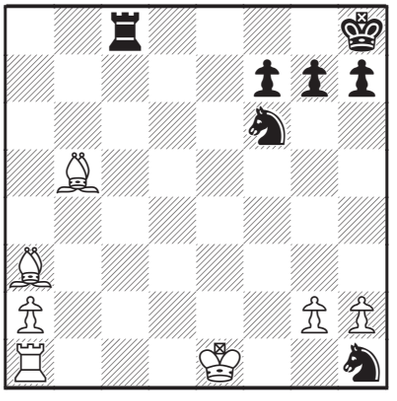
side pawns, and Black's Knight is trapped in the corner. White's position is therefore better and easier to play.

19...e4
With this aggressive move my opponent offered me a draw. I knew I stood better here, but the waters are still choppy and a forced win is nowhere in sight. If I decide to play on, all three results are possible, and an outstanding result could slip through my fingers. As they say in "Rounders" it's hard to lose as long as you don't take a risk.

20.Be2 ....
But then again, you can't win much either. Let's go!

20...e3 21.Ne7+ ....
I wanted to get my Knight in position to capture on c8 as soon as my other Knight reaches b6 with tempo. I played this check before taking on e3 so that Black couldn't create complications with Nd5.

21...Kh8 22.Bxe3 axb5 23.Nb6 Ra3 24.Bc1 Rc3 25.Nbxc8 Rxc5 26.Ba3 Rcxc8 27.Nxc8 Rxc8 28.Bxb5 ....

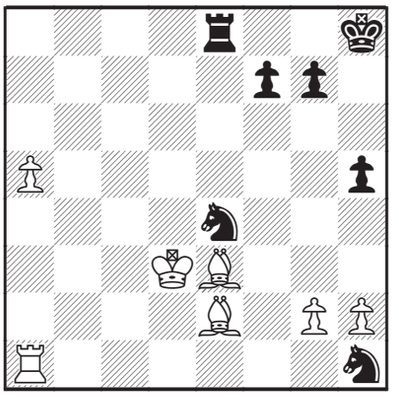


The complications have faded and White should be winning this ending with accurate play due to the Bishop pair, Black's incarcerated Knight, and the lethal passed a-pawn.

28...Rc2
Black does have some counterplay so precision is a must.

29.Be2 h5 30.Bc1 ....
My Bishop returns home for the third time this game to make way for the a-pawn.

30...Rc8 31.a4 Ne4 32.a5 Re8 33.Be3 Nc3 34.Kd2 Ne4+ 35.Kc2 Rc8+ 36.Kd3 Re8 1-0



My opponent made this move with one second left and resigned in view of the hanging Knight on h1. 36...Nhf2+ 37.Bxf2 Nxf2+ 38.Ke3 Ng4+ 39.Bxg4 hxg4 40.a6 +-.

SPICE Cup
10.22.2015 E92
Round 9
Brown, Michael William - Wang, Qibiao
Annotated by Michael William Brown

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 O-O 6.Nf3 e5 7.Be3 exd4 8.Nxd4 Nc6
A rare line in the King's Indian. I had not faced this move in a long time so I thought quite a bit here, but decided it was in my best interest to keep my knight on d4.

9.Nc2 Re8 10.f3 Nh5 11.Qd2 f5
Black's plan is to keep putting pressure on my center, but his advances leave his kingside a little open.

12.O-O Be6
A wise decision by Black. The alternative 12...Bxc3?! 13.Qxc3 fxe4 14.fxe4 Rxe4? 15.Bxh5 gxh5 16.Bh6 leaves Black completely lost, though Rxe4 is by no means forced. Nevertheless, Black should never trade his bishop for my knight unless he gets some real counterplay.

13.Rae1?! ....
Slightly inaccurate. Better would have been to play Bg5 immediately here. Both of us missed a strong continuation for Black.

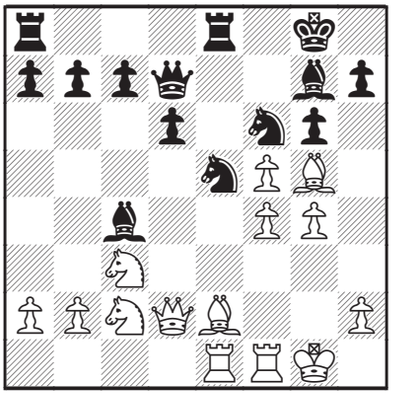
13...Ne5
13...f4! Black sacrifices a pawn but achieves great compensation. 14.Bxf4 Nxf4 15.Qxf4 Ne5 and Black has the initiative; the absence of White's dark-squared bishop makes life very difficult for White. 16.Ne3 (16.Na3 c6) 16...Bf6.

14.Bg5! ....
Now I find the right plan. I need to prepare for taking on f5 and so I open up my e-file for my Rook, eyeing Black's pieces on the e-file and the kingside.

14...Qd7 15.exf5 Bxc4?!
Again, an inaccuracy. Black needs to retake on f5 in order to keep White's kingside majority at bay, as now they are unleashed.

16.g4! Nf6?!
16...Bxe2 had to be played. Then after 17.Rxe2 Nf6 18.Nd4 Nf7 19.Be3 White enjoys a better position, but Black is still fighting.

17.f4! ....



Another good move. Now Black is forced to lose material since his knight on e5.

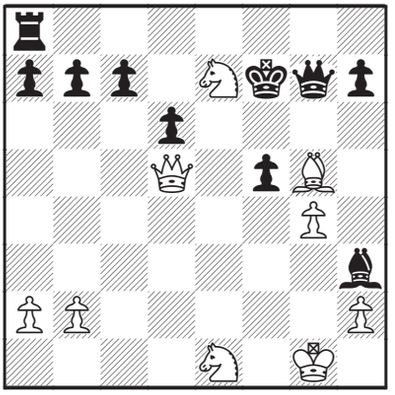
17...Bxe2 18.fxe5 ....
The point! Otherwise the pawn on g4 would just be hanging.

18...Bxf1 19.exf6 Rxe1 20.Nxe1 ....
and both of Black's bishops are hanging; thus I win another piece and enjoy a material advantage.

20...Bh3 21.fxg7 Qxg7?
Though Black does get rid of the dangerous g-pawn, he should have started with 21...gxf5 22.Nd5 Qb5. Now Black has this option, forcing White to take care of his own back rank. Though White is still winning, Black is kicking.

22.Nd5 gxf5 23.Ne7+ ....
also winning was 23.Nf6+ Kh8 24.Nh5 Qf7 (24...Qg6 25.Qc3+ Kg8 26.Nf6+ Kf8 27.Qxh3 and Black cannot take on g5 because of Nxh7+) 25.Qc3+ Kg8 26.Nf6+ Kf8 27.Qxh3 and White wins the Bishop.

23...Kf7 24.Qd5+?? ....



A horrific mistake. Both of us missed Black's best defense in this position. 24.Nxf5 Qe5 25.Nd3 Qe4 26.Nf4 and Black's bishop falls.

24...Ke8?
24...Kf8! saves the day. After 25.Qxf5+ (25.Nf3 trying to get the last piece in the game fails to 25...Bxg4 26.Nxf5 Bxf3 and White's position crumbles) 25...Qf7 =. Black's king is actually completely safe, thanks to the threat of Qf1 if I move my Queen.

25.Nxf5 ....
After this I conducted the attack flawlessly, as my moves are all natural.

25...Qe5 26.Qg8+ Kd7 27.Qxh7+ Kc6 28.Nd3! ....
This stops all of Black's counterplay, as his Queen can give no more checks!

28...Qh8 29.Ne7+ Kb5 30.Qe4 c6 31.Be3! ....
Another important move, blocking Black's escape square on b6. Now his position is completely hopeless as none of his pieces can help his king get out of the mating attack.

31...c5 32.Qxb7+ Kc4 33.Qb3# 1-0

Spice Cup
10.27.2015 D85
Round 3
Kivitskiy, Konstantin - Eckert, Doug

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.e4 Nxc3 6.bxc3 Bg7 7.Nf3 c5 8.Be3 O-O 9.Be2 Nc6 10.O-O Bg4 11.d5 Ne5 12.Nxe5 Bxe2 13.Qxe2 Bxe5 14.Rab1 Bxc3 15.Rxb7 Qd6 16.Qc4 Bb4 17.a3 Bxa3 18.Bh6 Bb4 19.Bxf8 Kxf8 20.f4 a5 21.e5 Qa6 22.Rb5 a4 23.f5 gxf5 24.e6 Qd6 25.Rxf5 f6 26.Qh4 Kg7 27.Rxf6 exf6 28.Rb7+ Kg6 29.Qg4+ Kh6 30.Qf5 1-0

Spice Cup
10.19.2015 A45
Round 4
Watson, John - Yanayt, Eugene

1. d4 Nf6 2. Bg5 Ne4 3. Bf4 c5 4. f3 Qa5+ 5. c3 Nf6 6. d5 Qb6 7. Bc1 e6 8. e4 exd5 9. exd5 d6 10. c4 Bf5 11. Nc3 Be7 12. Bd3 Bxd3 13. Qxd3 O-O 14. Nge2 Na6 15. O-O Nd7 16. f4 f5 17. Kh1 g6 18. b3 Rae8 19. Bb2 Bf6 20. Rae1 Re7 21. Ng1 Rfe8 22. Re6 Nb4 23. Qd2 Bg7 24. Rfe1 Qd8 25. a3 Na6 26. Nf3 Nc7 27. Rxe7 Rxe7 28. Ng5 Nf8 29. h3 Qe8 30. Rxe7 Qxe7 31. Nd1 Bxb2 32. Nxb2 b6 33. Nd1 h6 34. Nf3 Nh7 35. g4 Nf6 36. gxf5 gxf5 37. Qg2+ Kh7 38. Nf2 Qe3 39. Nh4 Qc1+ 40. Qg1 Qxg1+ 41. Kxg1 Nh5 42. Nxf5 Ne8 43. Nd3 Kg6 44. Ne3 Nef6 45. Kg2 Ne4 46. Kf3 Nd2+ 47. Ke2 Nxb3 48. Ng4 Ng3+ 49. Kf3 Nf5 50. Ke2 h5 51. Nh2 Nfd4+ 52. Kf2 Kf5 53. Nf1 Ke4 54. Ng3+ Kxd3 55. f5 Kxc4 56. f6 Kxd5 57. f7 Ne6 0-1

2016 All-America Chess Team Announced

continued from Pg. 14

The United States Chess Federation wishes to congratulate each of the 64 members of this year's All-America Chess Team for receiving this prestigious award!

2016 USCF All-America Chess Team Sponsored by Trophies Plus:

List of all California players.

Age 17 (min. rating 2450)
Michael Brown CA

Age 15 (min. rating 2400)
Kesav Viswanadha CA

Age 14 (min. rating 2350)
Cameron Wheeler CA
Joshua Sheng CA
Vignesh Panchanatham CA
Craig Hilby CA

Age 13 (min. rating 2300)
Albert Lu CA

Age 12 (min. rating 2200)
Annie Wang CA
Rayan Taghizadeh CA

Age 10 (min. rating 2100)
Andrew Zhang Hong CA

Age 9 (min. rating 2000)
Chinguun Bayaraa CA
Balaji Daggupati CA

Congratulations to all!

Bykovtsev medals at 2015 World Youth!

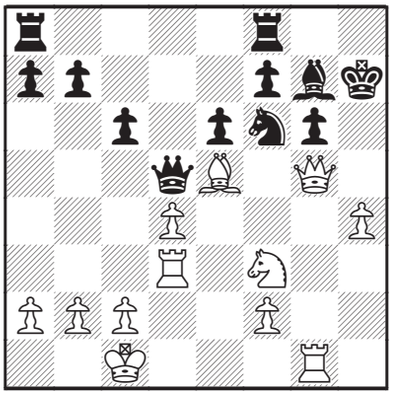
By James Woodward

The FIDE World Youth & Cadets Chess Championships were held in Porto Carras, Halkidiki, Greece. The age categories were under 18 years old, under 16, under 14, under 12, under 10 and under 8...both Boys and Girls divisions.

Agata Bykovtsev brought home the Bronze medal in the Girls U16 section with a great 8/11 score!

Round 1 Win with Black vs Kincso Jakab (FIDE 1768) from Romania.

Round 2 Win with White vs Mariam Avetisyan (FIDE 1936) from Armenia.



Position after 23....Kh7

Agata, aggressive as she is, offers up her Queen by snapping off the knight.

24. Bf6! Bh6
The computer suggest 25. Kb1 with a winning advantage, but Agata continues throwing pieces at the king.

25. h5 ....
The computer says 25...gxh5 is =.

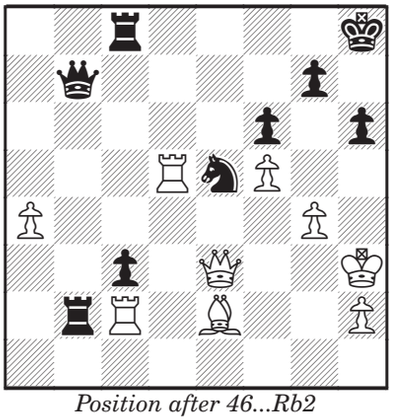
25... Bg5+ 26. Ng5+ Kh6 27. hg6 Qf5?!
27...Kg6 is slightly better, but losing.

28. g7 Rg8 29. Rh3+ Qh3 30. Nh3 c5 31. Nf4 1-0

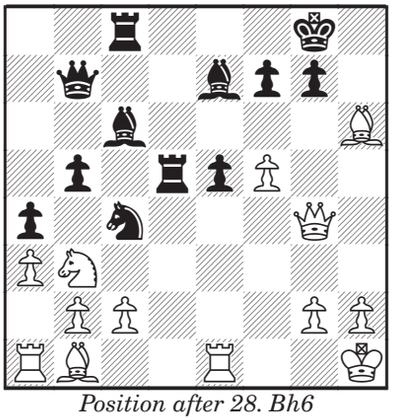
Agata Bykovtsev jw

Round 3 Win with Black vs Hajra Chandreyee (FIDE 1928) from India.

Agata essays a Sicilian Najdorf and the game jockeys back and forth until her opponent begins to mis-step on her 26th move. Agata gains some annoying passed pawns, one of which begins to tie up her opponent's position. Agata pressures on the queen side, invading white's territory with a rook and finally drops the hammer with a knight on the king side.



Position after 46...Rb2



Position after 28. Bh6

47. Qc1 Qb7 48. Rb5 Rb5 49. ab5 Nf3 50.Qe3 Ne1 51. Rc3 Rc3 52. Qc3 Qg2+ 53. Kh4 Qh2+ 54. Qh3 Ng2+ 0-1

Round 4 Win with White vs Fiona Sieber (FIDE 2180) from Germany.

Another Sicilian. Sieber gains an advantage, but under estimates Agata's attack. Agata makes her pay.

dm

28...Bf6?
The computer says 28...g6 29. fg6 Rd6 30. gf7+ Kf7 31. Rf1+ Ke8 32. Qg8+ Kd7 33. Nc5+ Kc7 34. Qg7 +/-.

29. Bg7 Ne3 30. Re3 Bg5 31. Re1 Kg7 32. Qg5+ Kf8 33. Na5 Qd7 34. Nc6 Rc6 35. Ba2 Rd2 36. f6 Qd4 37. Qg7+ Ke8 38. Qf7+ Kd8 39. Qe7+ Kc8 40. f7 1-0

Round 5 Loss with Black vs Oliwia Kiolbasa (FIDE 2182) from Poland.

Another Sicilian Najdorf. Agata sac's an exchange for a passed pawn, but goes astray.

Round 6 Loss with White vs Mai Narva (FIDE 2203) from Estonia.

Agata allowed herself a backward pawn on d4 and lots of tactics developed around that square. Narva sacrificed an exchange for connected passed pawns on c4 & d4, supported by the bishop pair, which proved to be winning.

Round 7 Win with Black vs Margareth Olde (FIDE 2019) from Estonia.

Agata employs a King Indian, fends off an attack and starts pressuring with her own, eventually winning a piece and forcing a trade down to a easily won K & P endgame.

WYCC Girls U16
11.01.2015 E62
Round 7
Olde, Margareth (2019) -
Bykovtsev, Agata (2117)

1.c4 Nf6 2.g3 g6 3.Bg2 Bg7 4.Nf3 O-O 5.O-O d6 6.d4 c6 7.Nc3 Qa5 8.e4 e5 9.h3 Nbd7 10.Re1 exd4 11.Nxd4 Ne5 12.Bf1 Re8 13.Be3 Be6 14.Nxe6 Rxe6 15.f4 Ned7 16.Bg2 Rae8 17.Bf2 Nb6 18.c5 dxc5 19.e5 Nfd7 20.Ne4 Bf8 21.h4 Qb4 22.Re2 f5 23.a3 Qa5 24.Ng5 R6e7 25.Rc1 h6 26.Nh3 c4 27.Rd2 Rg7 28.Kh1 Nc5 29.Bxc5 Bxc5 30.Rd8 Rxd8 31.Qxd8+ Kh7 32.Rd1 Qa4 33.Kh2 Qb3 34.Rd2 Qe3 35.Rc2 Rd7 36.Qe8 Qd3 37.Rc1 Re7 38.Qf8 Qd7 39.Qb8 Qd2 40.Rb1 a6 41.Qf8 Nd5 42.Kh1 Ne3 43.Bf3 Ng4 44.Bxg4 fxg4 45.f5 Qd5+ 46.Kh2 Rg7

The tournament hall

dm

47.fxg6+ Rxg6 48.Qf1 gxh3 49.Rd1 Qxe5 50.Rd7+ Rg7 51.Rxg7+ Kxg7 52.Qxc4 Qxb2+ 53.Kxh3 Qe5 54.Qg4+ Kf6 55.Qd1 Qd5 56.Qc1 Qf5+ 57.Kh2 Kg6 58.Qc4 Bd6 59.Qg8+ Kf6 60.Qd8+ Ke5 61.Qe8+ Kd5 62.Qe3 Bxg3+ 63.Kg1 Bf2+ 0-1

Round 8 Win with Black vs Ashritha Eswaran (FIDE 2207) from U.S.A.

Agata wins a pawn early on, then side-steps some tactics to win a second pawn, grinding her team mate down in the endgame.

Round 9 Win with White vs Qiyu Zhou (FIDE 2328) from Canada.

WYCC Girls U16
11.03.2015 B70
Round 9
Bykovtsev, Agata (2117) -
Zhou, Qiyu (2328)

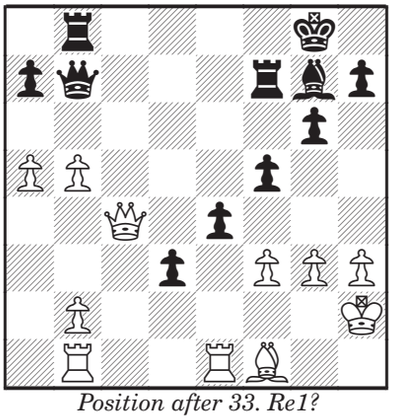
1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.d4 cxd4 5.Nxd4 g6 6.Bc4 Bg7 7.O-O O-O 8.Bb3 Nc6 9.Re1 Nd7 10.Nf3 a6 11.Bg5 b5 12.Rb1 Bb7 13.Nd5 Nc5 14.Qd2 Nxb3 15.axb3 Re8 16.Qf4 f6 17.Bh6 e6 18.Bxg7 Kxg7 19.Ne3 Qe7 20.Rbd1 Red8 21.h4 ....
I would expect nothing less from Agata! Always looking to go after her opponents king.

21...Ne5 22.Nd4 Kh8 23.Rd2 Rd7 24.c4 b4 25.f3 Rad8 26.Ng4 Kg7 27.h5 Nxg4
The computer thinks 27...g5 to attempt to supress the attack.

28.Qxg4 Re8 29.f4 Kf7 30.hxg6+ hxg6 31.Rd3 Rg8 32.Rh3 Rg7 33.Rg3 Rc7 34.f5! Bc8 35.fxg6+ Kg8 36.Qh4 Rc5 37.Rh3 Kf8 38.Rf1 f5 39.Qh6 Qf6 40.Qh8+ Ke7 41.Rh7 Rxh7 42.Qxh7+ Kf8 43.Ne2 Qg7 44.Qh2 Re5 45.Qh4 Ke8 46.exf5 exf5 47.Nf4 Re4 48.Rd1 Qe5 49.Qh5 Kf8 50.Qh7 Qg7 51.Nh5 Qb7 52.g7+ 1-0

Round 10 Win with Black vs Nela Pychova (FIDE 2137) from Czechoslovakia.

Agata employs another King Indian.



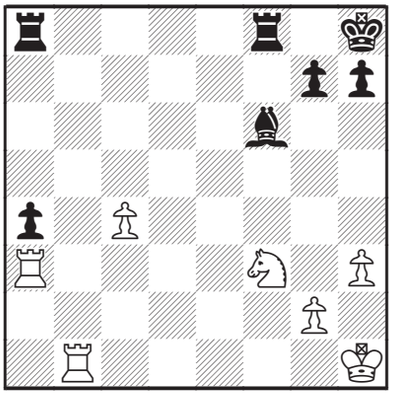
Position after 33. Re1?

The computer shows 33. fe4 fe4 34. Bg2 as better. Agata jumps on the opportunity to punish!

33...Rc8 34. Qe6 Rc2+ 35. Kh1 Qc7 36. f4 Qc5 37. Bg2 Qf2 38. Rg1 Bd4 39. Qd5 Be3 40. Qd8+ Kg7 41. Kh2 Qf3 42. b6 ab6 43. ab6 Bg1+ 44. Rg1 Qe3 45. Qd6 Qc5 46. Qb8 Rb2 47. Ra1 Qb6 48. Qe8 Rg2+ 0-1

WYCC Girls U16
11.05.2015 B90
Round 11
Bykovtsev, Agata (2117) -
Tsolakidou, Stavroula (2279)

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Nc3 a6 4.d4 cd4 5.Nd4 Nf6 6.Bc4 e6 7.O-O Qc7 8.Bb3 Nc6 9.Kh1 Be7 10.f4 Na5 11.f5 Nb3 12.ab3 O-O 13.Rf3 Bd7 14.Rg3 Kh8 15.Bg5 d5 16.Bf6 Bxf6 17.fe6 fe6 18.ed5 Be5 19.Rd3 ed5 20.Nd5 Qd6 21.Nf3 Bf5 22.Rd2 Bb2 23.Rb1 Bf6 24.Ne3 Qf4 25.Nf5 Qf5 26.Rd5 Qe4 27.Qd3 Qd3 28.Rd3 b5 29.c4 bc4 30.bc4 a5 31.Ra3 a4 32.h3?! ....



At this point, both players have about 3 1/2 minutes left to make time control at 40 moves. The computer likes 32. c5 to cut off the f8-a3 diagonal from the bishop. After 32...Be7 33. Rba1 Rf4 34. g3 Re4 35. Nd2 looks to be fairly level.

32....Be7 33.Ra2 a3 34.Nd4 Rfc8 35.Rc1 Bf6 36.Nb5 Bb2 37.Rc2 Ra4 38.Na3 Ba3 39.Rc3 Bb4 40.Ra4 Bc3 41.g4 Kg8 42.Kg2 Rf8 43.Ra3 Bd4 44.Rd3 Rf4 45.Rd2 Bc5 46.Rc2 Kf7 47.Kg3 g5 48.Rc3 Ke6 49.Rc2 Ke5 50.h4 h6 51.hg5 hg5 52.Rc3 Re4 53.Kf3 Kd4 54.Rc1 Re3+ 55.Kg2 Rc3 56.Rh1 Kc4 57.Rh6 Kd5 58.Rf6 Be3 59.Rf3 Ke4 60.Rf1 Bf4 61.Re1+ Re3 62.Rb1 Re2+ 63.Kf1 Kf3 64.Rb3+ Re3 65.Rb2 Rc3 66.Rf2+ Kxg4 67.Kg2 Rd3 68.Re2 Rd2 0-1

That had to be a tough loss. A draw would have forced a 3-way tie and I believe Agata would have taken the gold medal on tie-breaks. But, at least her opponent from Greece took gold for the the host country!?

dm

2015 World Youth

My Experience at the 2015 World Youth Chess Championships

By WIM Annie Wang

"I'm sorry, but we are closed," the airline lady said, "Baggage check-in stops an hour before the flight."
"Could you please make an exception for us? We are only two or three minutes late. My daughter is representing the U.S.A. in the World Youth Chess Championship. Please help us."
"OK, but please be quick."

It was a late Friday afternoon, the worst time to beat the LA traffic. Our hired driver had arrived almost 45-minutes later than scheduled. With the help of the airline counter lady, my dad and I caught our flight to Istanbul, from where we flew to Thessaloniki, Greece, where the 2015 World Youth Chess Championships were held. The flight from LAX to Istanbul was comfortable, as the food was pretty good, and the flight was not full. Everything seemed under control. That is, until we arrived in Thessaloniki without our luggage. After leaving our names and hotel name to the luggage service office, we took a two-hour bus ride in one of the provided buses and arrived at the tournament venue at 10pm local time. (One of our bags arrived one day later, and the second arrived two days later.)

The tournament was held in a beautiful resort by the Aegean Sea, at the same place where the 2010 World Youth Chess Championships were held. The resort was a 1,763 hectares property, containing two large hotels, a private marina, a golf course, a vineyard, and several beautiful beaches and mountains. Olive trees covered most of the mountains and lined the sidewalks as well.

Every year, more players participate in the World Youth Chess Championships. This year, the two large hotels near the playing halls were so crowded that some delegations from other countries were forced to stay outside of the resort.

My first-round opponent was a Canadian girl who has the same last name as me. I held the Black pieces, misplayed the opening, and nearly lost – but my opponent made a few inaccuracies, allowing me to win. I was lucky to win my first round game. The day after, I held the White pieces, playing against Yan Tianqi, from China. This game was arguably my favorite from the entire 11-round tournament - I made few mistakes and took advantage of my opponent's inactive pieces, winning without any difficulties. The game, shown below, began with the Classical Variation of the Nimzo-Indian Defense.

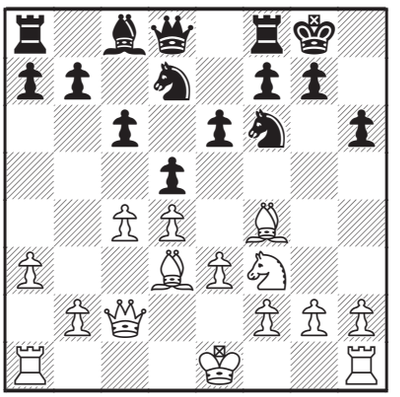
World Youth Chess Ch. 2015
10.26.2015 E37
Round 2
Wang, Annie (2087) -
Yan, Tianqi (1799)

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2 0–0 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.Qxc3 Ne4 7.Qc2 d5
Definitely not the main line. Most common is 7...f5.

8.Nf3 Nd7 9.Bf4 c6?!
9...c5 9...c5 would have been a better move; Black needs some space to develop her pieces, and c7-c5 provides that space.
10.dxc5 Ndxc5 11.b4 Nd7 12.e3.

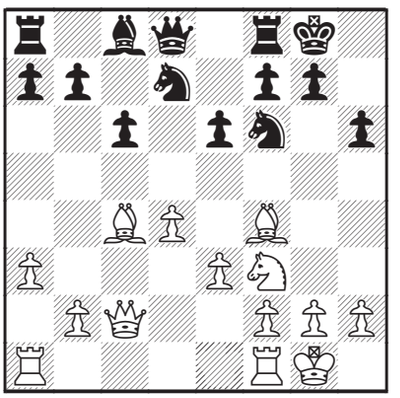
10.e3 h6!?
I am not entirely sure why my opponent played this. Perhaps she was afraid of 11. Bd3, but that could have been refuted with either ...f7-f5 or just Ne4-f6.
11.Bd3 Nef6

see diagram



Also not very good. Black needs to keep his knight on e4 in order to retain some resemblance of counter play. 11...f5 12.Ne5 Nxe5 13.Bxe5 I am still better in this position, just slightly less so than in the position after the continuation in the game. Black's bishop is a big pawn, White has an outpost on e5, and Black's e4 knight, the only good piece in her position, will soon be kicked away. 13... Nd6 14.cxd5 exd5 15.0–0 Be6 16.b3.

12.0–0 dxc4 13.Bxc4 ....

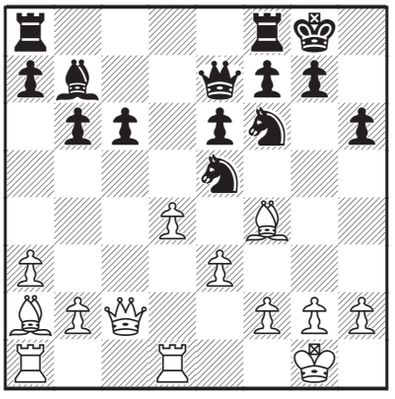


13.Qxc4! 13. Qxc4 was superior to 13. Bxc4, mainly because 13. Qxc4 prevents Black from pushing his b7 pawn and developing his light-squared bishop to the a8-h1 diagonal. 13...Nd5 14.Bg3 Ne7 15.Bh4 Still preventing ...b7-b6. 15...a5 16.Qc2.

13...Qe7
Black should've taken this opportunity to develop his bishop. 13...b6 14.Be2 Bb7 15.Bd6 Re8 16.Rac1 Rc8 17.b4.

14.Rfd1 ....
14.Be2! c5 15.dxc5 e5 16.Bg3 Nh5 17.b4 Nxg3 18.hxg3.

14...b6 15.Ba2 Bb7 16.Ne5 Nxe5?



I had been hoping for 16...Nxe5, but was expecting 16...c5, putting up a little more resistance to my attack. The continuation in the game allows me to force Black's knight away from f6 and play Ba2-b1, targeting the h7 square. 16...c5 17.Nc4 Be4 18.Qa4 Rfc8 19.Nd6 Rd8 20.Nxe4 Nxe4 21.d5.

17.dxe5 Nd5 18.Bb1 f5 19.exf6 Qxf6
19...Nxf6 loses to 20. Bd6, skewering Black's queen and f8 rook.

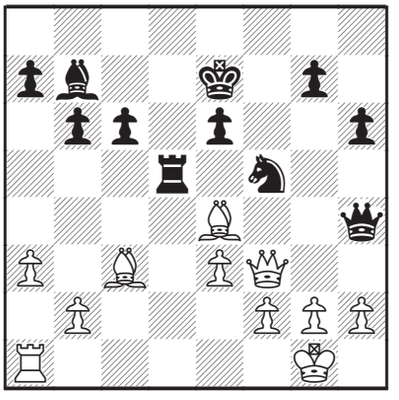
20.Bg3 Rad8
At this point, I wasn't exactly sure how to proceed. I considered 21. Rd4, but was scared off by 21...Nxe3, since I missed 24. Bc2!! after 22. Qh7 Kf7 23. fxe3 Rxd4.
20. Qe4 would leave the b2 pawn hanging, and my bishop on b1 was trapping my rook on a1. Eventually, I settled on 21. Qh7+ followed by 22. Bc2, connecting my rooks.

21.Qh7+ Kf7 22.Bc2 Ne7
22...Qxb2 would lead to 23. Qg6+ and 24. Bh4+. 22...Ne7 threatens to trap White's queen on h7 after 23. Nf5 or Ng6.
22...c5 23.Qe4 Bc6 24.Be5 Qf5 25.Qxf5+ exf5 26.Bxf5.

23.Qe4 Nf5?
23...Ba8! 24.Qa4 Qxb2 25.Rdb1 Qc3 26.Rc1 Qa5 27.Qxa5 bxa5 28.Be4.

24.Be5! Qh4
After this move, I spent at least 7 or 8 minutes calculating 25. Qf3, trying to find a way to win a pawn after 25... Kg8, before noticing that I could simply play 25. Rxd8, solving the problem of 25...Kg8 and winning a pawn.

25.Rxd8 Rxd8 26.Qf3 Rd5 27.Bc3 Ke7 28.Be4! ....



Not playing 28. e4, after which 28... Nd4 would allow Black to escape White's trap.

28...c5 29.Bxd5 Bxd5 30.Qe2 Kf8 31.Re1 Nd6 32.f3 b5 33.e4 Bc4?
33...Bc6 34.Qe3 Qg5 35.Qxg5 hxg5 36.Rc1.

34.Qe3 Nb7 35.Rd1 Qe7 36.Be5 ....
36.Qf4+! Kg8 37.Qb8+ Kf7 38.Qc8 Nd6 39.Qc6.

36...b4 37.axb4 cxb4 38.Rc1 Na5 39.b3 Bxb3 40.Rc8+ ...
Winning the queen after 40...Kf7 and 41. Rc7.
40...Kf7 1–0

Lile Koridze, from Georgia (the country), was my next adversary. We contested a sharp line of the Nimzo – Indian Defense, in which I was playing with the Black pieces. After Koridze made a small inaccuracy, I gained the advantage, eventually winning a pawn, and then, the game.

At this point in the tournament, I was very pleased with my performance – I currently had a perfect score. The next game, however, would bring me to meet my toughest opponent yet.

In the fourth round, holding the White pieces, I played Gabriela Antova, the 2013 WYCC bronze medalist, from Bulgaria. I had previously played Antova in the 2011 WYCC, where I blundered horribly and lost within two hours. This game was a Benoni Defense and was equal until the thirtieth move, when Antova lost a pawn and did not find the correct defense. Luckily for her, though, I misplayed the endgame and blundered the pawn back. The final result was a draw.

The day after, I was Black, playing against the second seed, Akshaya Kalaiyalahan. The game started off with the Open Catalan, with Akshaya playing a sideline. My position was better out of the opening, but I let her gain a lot of space. Soon, the game had become extremely unpleasant for me, with my weakened pawns and cramped position. But after I took advantage of a few mistakes by Akshaya, the position opened up and became equal once more. Unfortunately, I then blundered an exchange, and only barely managed to draw the game, after my opponent failed to win the endgame. By this time, I was looking forward to the much-deserved rest day during which I visited a nearby village with some teammates.

I held the White pieces in the sixth round, playing against Ksenia Golbieva, of Belarus. Ksenia played the Slav Defense, but went wrong after playing an incorrect fourth move. This allowed me to grab the advantage, trading into an endgame in which Golbieva's pieces were cramped and on less than ideal squares. However, after trading off my bishop pair, I soon discovered that Ksenia's position was better than my own. I lost a pawn, but initiated a massive counter-attack as compensation. The game was drawn.

The following day, I was Black against Tianhui Jie, a fellow American. I misplayed the opening and had a weakened c6 pawn, but my opponent did not exploit the weakness well enough to earn a win. Especially during the middle game, my opponent and I seemed to be at an impasse; I could not attack my opponent, but she could not break through my defenses either. Eventually, I managed to open the queenside to allow my pieces some activity, only to have Tianhui sacrifice her bishop for three pawns, leading to a draw. However, I apparently missed a winning tactic that would lead to mate.

Round 8 was contested against Vantika Agrawal, from India. I played the White side of a Kings' Indian Defense. I had an advantage for almost the entire game, from the opening, to the middle game. I was up an exchange at the end of the first time control. I made a move, went to the bathroom, came back, and discovered that my position was now totally losing, due to a major oversight on my part. Needless to say, I lost the game.

Round 9 was another one of my "lucky games." Playing with Black against my friend, Joanna Liu, from Arizona, my king fell under attack, and I nearly got mated. In fact, Joanna could have, at some point, taken my queen, but she missed the continuation and settled for an exchange instead. Later, Joanna did not play the R+R vs. R+B endgame correctly, and allowed me to draw the game.

The penultimate round was played against a girl from Lithuania. After going for so long with only draws and losses, I was determined to win this game. While I had been better during the start of the game, a miscalculation allowed my opponent to take the advantage. I thought that my pawn sacrifice would allow me to win a piece, but, in reality, it only allowed me to lose a pawn. Luckily, my opponent allowed me to pin her rook and queen, and I won the game. I was extremely happy to win my first game since round 3.

The final game was played against Mariya Nosacheva, of Russia. I was outplaying my opponent, but missed a simple double-attack and allowed Mariya to equalize the position. However, I was determined to win this game, and used my advanced a-pawn and dark-squared bishop to lock her rook on a2. My king then went around and picked off her pawns, winning the game.

All in all, I only lost one game in the whole tournament to the eventual bronze medalist from India. I was even up an exchange in that game, but blundered in a winning position. In total, I drew five of the 11 games in the tournament, including four draws in a row from the 4th to 7th rounds. In several games, I was totally losing, but managed to draw or even win the games. I was not completely satisfied with my performance, and felt that I could have played better. But there is always next year!

In the end, the Indian team did extremely well this year, winning 5 out of 12 gold medals. Team U.S.A. only won three medals this year, with our own Agata Bykovtsev taking bronze in GU16.

On our way back, we stopped in Istanbul, an energetic city where the West and East meet. I visited several of the famous Turkish mosques, including the Blue Mosque and Haghia Sofia, but, unfortunately, both mosques were under renovation. The beauty of these two mosques was exquisite, despite being hundreds of years old. Dolmabahçe Palace, the home of many famous Turkish leaders, was another highlight. The palace was extremely beautiful, with real gold lining the ceilings and pillars, luxurious rugs, and an immense crystal chandelier that contains over four hundred lightbulbs.

On the last day of our stay, my dad wanted to walk across the bridge separating Europe and Asia. We did walk across a bridge, but it was the wrong one. The bridge we crossed was only one of the small bridges stretching across the Golden Horn Bay, one of the primary inlets of the Bosphorus Strait. Next time, we shall walk across the correct bridge!

jw

Solutions to Outside Shots!

From the back cover.

1. 1.... Ne1 2. Rxc3 Rxc3 3. Qxc3 Qg2+ 4. Kh4 Qxh2+ 5. Qh3 Ng2+ 0-1 Chandreyee - Bykovtsev 2015 World Youth Ch.

2. 1. Bxc7 f5 2. Bd6 f4 3. Qd2 f3 4. Bxb5 Nf4 5t. Bc4 1-0 Wang - Peters, American Open 2015.

3. 1.... Rg2+ 0-1 After 2. Kxg2 Qb2+ picks up the rook. Pychova - Bykovtsev 2015 World Youth Ch.

4. 1. Nxh7 Bg7 Nxf8+ 1-0 Peters - Heredia, American Open 2015.

5. 1.... Rc3!! 2. bxc3 Qxd3# Rivera - Shlyakhtenko, American Open 2015.

6. 1....Rxb2 2. Qxb2 Ne4 3. Qa3 Nxb6 wins a piece 0-1 Creger - Matikozyan, American Open 2015.

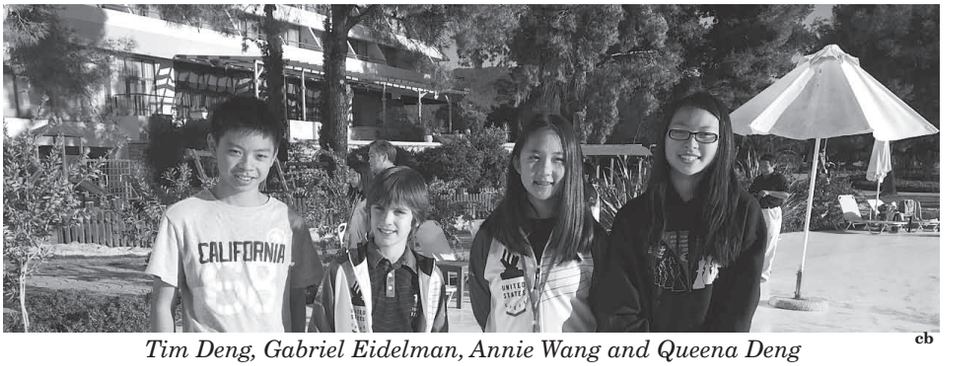
2015 World Youth

The highs and lows of a 10 year old initiation to the international chess scene: Gabriel Eidelman (Open U10) at the World Youth in Halkidiki, Greece

By Claire Benoit, mom

Twelve days of complete immersion in the chess universe from morning to night with kids from all over the world sharing the passion, in a 5 star resort in Greece doesn't get much better than that!

From Gabriel:
"From the moment I arrived in Greece, I was very happy 1: Because I had qualified for the tournament and 2: Because the hotel/playing hall looked great. Their food at the Sithonia was amazing, especially breakfast. One of the official coaches, IM Andranik Matikozyan, happens to have been my teacher for many years, so it was awesome to have him there and I made many new friends. Being focused on chess all day long was the ultimate, so all in all, it was great!"



Tim Deng, Gabriel Eidelman, Annie Wang and Queena Deng cb

The World Youth is admittedly a huge tournament with a lot of intensity and emotional involvement, 11 games takes a lot of stamina, yet one game a day on a span of 12 days including a day off is luxurious!

The hotel, The Porto Carras Grand Resort in Halkidiki Greece was an ideal venue for this kind of event! The two hotels, the Sithonia and Meliton were filled to capacity only with the chess tournament crowd, considering it was off tourists season. It felt very safe, family friendly, there were many activities on site such as a ping-pong table, a big field, perfect for playing soccer, there was a daily soccer game before lunch (Gabriel opted out of this one to prepare for his games), many pools and the beach (for the braves who were not intimidated by the cold), bike rentals, a golf course (some parents went for rounds during the games!), a spa, stores, a great marina with a café/bar, also awesome for parents to hangout during the games. Gabriel enjoyed playing ping-pong when we first arrived, before it got too crowded, where he befriended the "Monacans" as he called them, (Monegasques from Monaco) with whom he could practice his French, and was enjoying beating them all! We encountered them throughout the tournament and had a nice connection! There was even a casino which seemed to be the coaches late night hangout (oops, am I not supposed to mention that?!).

As a bonus we apparently had " May" weather which was exceptional at that time of the year.

Gabriel and I started the trip and my husband and daughter met us a few days before the end of the tournament, we splurged in a few post tournament stops to Athens, Rome and Venice since we were in the area!!

Here's an overview of our experience. Tuesday October 20th.

Just took off from Newark, our first stop from Los Angeles, heading to Munich and then Thessaloniki, Greece, I'm staring at the sunset, reflecting on the amazing power of focus, from the universe of a chess board with its infinite possibilities leading to traveling the world . . .

Lot's of emotions. All the thoughts, dreams about this trip materializing. So many years of talking about it. This morning came, a date that seemed so far away, just arrived in a blink of an eye. So much preparation, chess lessons, practice, tournament playing. Setting up all the logistics, meeting with all of Gabriel's teachers at school to get the homework. A roller coaster of feelings, on one hand a sense of adventure, going on a trip, but wait, this is not a vacation, it is my little warrior going to fight, anticipating to be at the top of his game, putting to use all the countless hours of studying, going into the battlefield with all his might.

I'm a chess mom and to quote Magnus Carlsen's dad, I'm a servant! Happily so that is, I love every aspect of this mission, this one being particularly precious, and I am super proud of my little guy. I have tremendous respect for the fact that he set himself a goal a few years ago, went for it, worked super hard and made it happen. Standing at 10 years old having accomplished that is significant. Of course Gabriel's in for the win. He's hungry for a medal. Will he get there, we'll see!

He had a nice warm-up recently with his USA Team's (with Anthony Ge, Robert Shlyakhtenko and Raphael Manahan) victory (6-2) against the Hungarian Team online on chess.com, event being part of the Global Chess

Festival headed by Judit Polgar.

After about twenty hours of flying, and an 1½ hour pretty stressful taxi ride, which I shouldn't complain about since it was all set-up by the organizers sending a very nice driver who happened to be a TD (arbiter) at the tournament. Just that it was a two lane road and he was passing while cars were coming in the opposite direction, I wasn't sure we would make it alive! Somehow, through the windy roads of olive groves, we finally arrived at the Porto Carras.

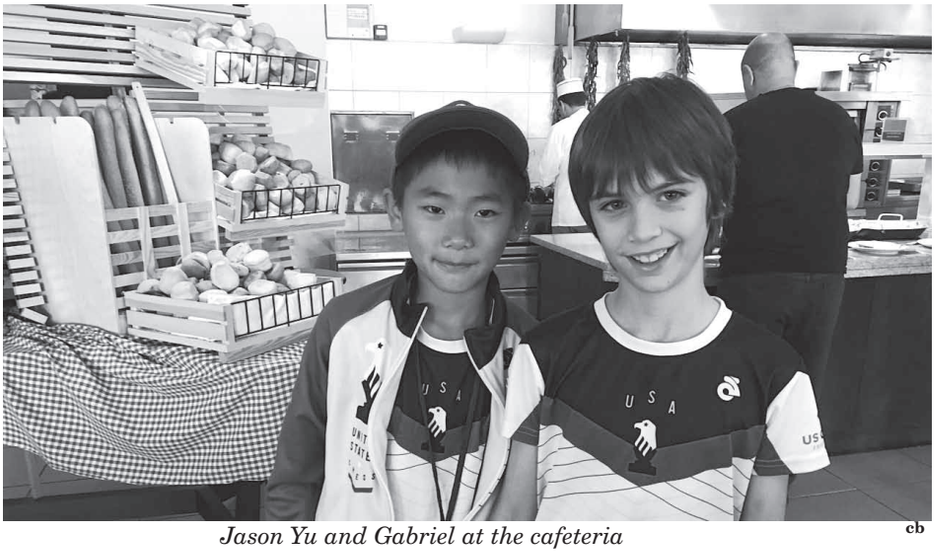
A beautiful property on the shore of the Aegean sea. We were in the first ones to arrive, so it was extremely quiet and somewhat eerily. I wanted to allow enough time for Gabriel to iron out the jetlag, it is a 10 hour time difference after all. There was a musty smell, we could feel the grandeur of the hotel but at the same time the casualties of the financial crisis. I came to find out that they opened this hotel just for the tournament, it is otherwise closed in the off season.

There are two hotels on the resort, the Sithonia where our room was and the Meliton where the Open U10 and Girls U8 were playing. We have a great view from our room, beautiful mountain side. I can imagine Aristotle walking around reflecting on his views of natural sciences.

We're told we have 15 minutes left to get lunch at the cafeteria. I'm thrilled to see a lavish spread of Mediterranean food. Profusion of olives, feta cheese, salads, fish dishes, many warm Greek meat and chicken dishes, fresh bread, fresh fruits and assorted desserts and oh . . . a soft ice cream machine, Gabriel's in heaven! We fight hard to not go to sleep, painful but have to. Gabriel sees a bed with pillows so pillow fighting it is! We finally crash at 7:00pm and sleep til 6:00 am!

In the next couple of days, people arrive in droves, filling up to capacity the two hotels. Gabriel and I are hanging out, a beautiful opportunity to spend time with my son. I'm all his. We became very creative with our in room activities, many pillow variations games such as obstacle courses with pillows hanging on our heads and bowling alley with plastic bottles. Our first few days were rainy and cold, absolutely perfect for sleeping, eating, walking, Gabriel taking long baths (a luxury for a Southern California drought striken boy!) interspersed by some chess, of course! We start seeing "our people", Gabriel Sam, Agata, Kevin Yang etc. . . in the midst of a crowd speaking so many different languages, we feel the electricity building up!

Finally the day of game #1 arrives. Starting time: 3:00 pm, daily. First opponent from Iceland! Black against Stefan Orri Davidsson. A win. Good start!



Jason Yu and Gabriel at the cafeteria cb

Game #2.
White against Yesuntumur Tugstumur (FIDE 1960) from Mongolia. Draw.

From Gabriel:

"I really enjoyed game #2 since I was on board #12 and the top twelve boards were wood boards and pieces and were wired for live stream. It was great to know that my family, friends and classmates could follow my game from home. I would have preferred winning this game but considering that my opponent Tugstumur Yesuntumur (Mongolia) got silver medal in U8 last year I felt ok about the draw. He gave me the coolest gift (some kids were bringing little gifts from their country) of six Mongolian chess stamps in a special folder. It's an awesome keepsake."

Game #3.
Black against Oskar Oglaza (FIDE 2118) from Poland. A loss.

Game #4.
White against fellow USA Henry Hawthorn. A win!

Game #5.
Black against Odysseas-Panagiotis Gavrill (Greece): a win (sorry host country!), perfect to launch the day off!

From Gabriel:

"The day off was the ultimate! I loved hanging out with my new chess friends. We played blitz and bughouse almost non-stop! I was very happy to see that many of these boys were very athletic so we also played soccer. We launched the day off with an evening of bowling and air hockey. The best day ever!"

Many people took advantage of the day off to visit some local historic sites such as some ancient caves, Mount Athos or a day trip to Thessaloniki, rich in history.
I followed Gabriel who thought hanging out with his friends and diving deep in the chess fun was way better

than Greek history!

Back on track . . .
Game #6.
White against Bardiya Daneshvar (FIDE 1897) from Iran . . . a painful loss. Should have won this one , but a fatal mistake at the end . . . agony .
Game #7.
Black against Neil Doknjas (Canada), a win.

Gabriel vs Andrey Tsvetkov cb

Game #8.
Gabriel is so thrilled to see his pairing, he's playing #2 seeded, Russian Andrey Tsvetkov, FIDE 2174.

From Gabriel:

"I was curious to see how my chess skills would measure up against some of the best players in the world. Until the very end, I felt really good about my game against Andrey Tsvetkov. I was completely winning this game, I even turned down a draw offer from my opponent. I sadly made another fatal mistake toward the very end and lost the game."

It was over 4 1/2 hours into that game and only another woman and I were waiting, I figured it was Andrey's mom. The waiting area where we, parents, were nervously awaiting the verdicts of our children's games was quite crowded until about 2 1/2 to 3 hours into the game. Some of the USA kids were reporting that Gabriel was winning, I was still holding any excitement. Finally, after an over 5 hour game, "THE" door of the playing hall that we had been staring at for so many hours opens, the little blond Russian boy runs out with his arms in the air and a gigantic smile. Following was Gabriel walking out slowly just trying to hold himself up and keep some dignity. He had lost. We solemnly headed directly to the room, bypassing the post game analysis. The chess tragedy had struck. This was the hardest moment in Gabriel's young chess "career". I was actually very proud of him for turning down a draw from such a high rated player, he could have gained many rating points but tried for a win, it didn't go his way but it showed strong chess character, I'm sure the reward will eventually come!

"Winning a winning game is the hardest thing in chess" says coach Andranik to Gabriel the next morning at his coaching session. Sounds familiar? For a 10 year old warrior going to battle on the international scene for the first time with a full intention of medalling, a winning game lost at the very end is unbearable. The more at stake, the greater the sting, so understandably, such a "chess tragedy" becomes all the more painful in such a tournament, but all part of the initiation and certainly rich in learning and growing!

Game #9.
Black against Youcheng Xiong from China. A win!

Game #10.
White against fellow USA Jason Wang (FIDE 2040). A draw.

Game #11.
Black against Lin Yingru from Spain (FIDE 1915). A draw.

cb

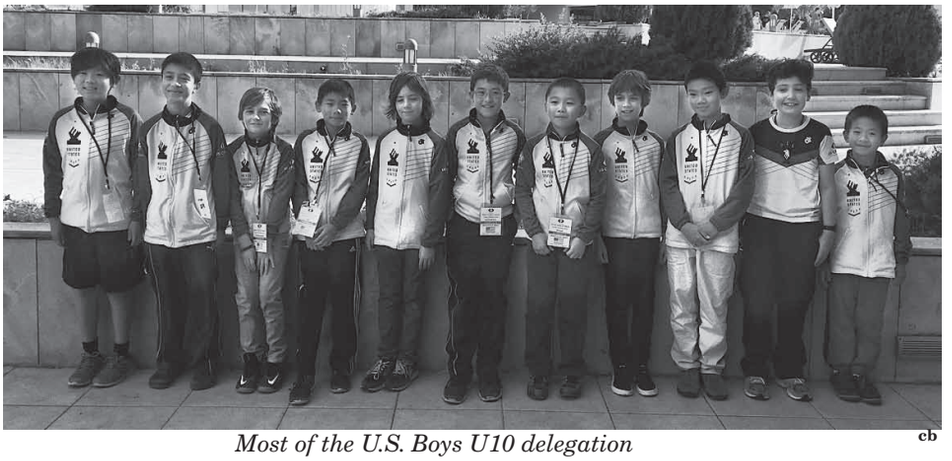
The daily coaching was great. The ratio of coaches/kids was 6:1. The post game analysis was taking place in the "Purple Bar" that actually had a pretty pink glow and made the post games analysis warm and cozy, particularly after a win! The coaches were there from 5-8.

Gabriel has studied with coach Andranik for some years but this hit a whole different level. Andranik had this amazing ability to predict every opening that his opponent would play with 100% accuracy! As a result Gabriel was very strong in openings and middle games except for the game against Polish Oskar Oglaza (game #3), where Gabriel prepared for some

Gabriel with coach Andranik cb

lines all morning and was told by Andranik that he would probably play a different line, which he did but unfortunately Gabriel didn't have time to prepare, there wasn't enough time before the game and lost that game. As a result he changed his coaching time for an earlier time slot!

This tournament was a well oiled operation for the most part, except for some pretty bad glitches such as the "toilet drama" where only two toilets (two hotel room toilets that is) next to the U10, GU8 playing hall, therefore forcing the kids to eat up their clock time to stand in line, waiting.



Most of the U.S. Boys U10 delegation cb

From Gabriel:
"One time, I was waiting in line for the toilet right behind my opponent, it was awkward."

An enormous U.S. delegation (130 players plus 310 people including coaches and families) had its share of puzzling situations but kudos for the heads of the US delegation Aviv Freedman and Michael Khodarkovsky, all the coaches and Jerry Nash who all did a great job to hold it together.

The main drawback of such a huge Team USA was that the players often had to play their teammates which was very unfortunate. Gabriel played two but some of his friends played 4, for him it almost felt like the US Nationals.

The source of many headaches was the quest for a WiFi connection. Considering this was a vacationer's resort, they were certainly not prepared for a very connected crowd heavily relying on internet for game preparation and communication between the USA Team. Only one tech guy trying to keep up with it all. Luckily, this was a very resourceful group of parents, one of them, Noah Chasin (Nico Chasin's (U10) dad from New York) started a Google group for the parents and coaches to communicate, and this group became one of the life line for game preparations giving the ability to parents to share games that had been played by the same opponent. It was very helpful!

I really enjoyed meeting some wonderful "chess families" from all over the USA, we formed nice friendships and there truly was a great Team USA spirit, mostly everyone being very supportive of each other. Even the wait during the games was particularly enjoyable, relating all our chess stories and anxieties, hearing all the different languages and cheering for all the USA kids.

All in all, a fantastic experience on so many fronts. Although my little warrior didn't quite reach the podium, I'm sure that the benefits of this experience will pay in droves and this was certainly a precious chapter in our family archives!

Gabriel finished with 6.5 points, "+2" score. "Very respectable for a first time international tournament" I said. "Hey, Awonder Liang also got 6.5 points in U10 in 2012, see Gabriel, you can aim for gold in the next one!"

Until next year! cb

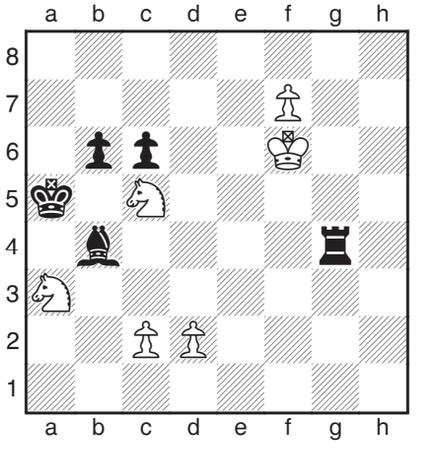
32nd U.S. Chess School

By IM Luke Harmon-Vellotti

Left to right: Arman Ambartsoumian, Joshua Sheng, Tatev Abrahamyan, ?, Greg Shahade, Jan Gustafsson, Kostya Kavutskiy, Craig Hilby, Daniel Gurevich, Luke Harmon-Vellotti

The U.S. Chess School hosted its latest event in Glendale, CA from Nov 28 thru Dec 1st. The non-profit group headed up by International Master Greg Shahade brought together one of the strongest Grandmasters in the world and eight of the best youth players in the United States. This 4-day invitation-only event was led by GM Jan Gustafsson who came all the way across the Atlantic from Germany to spend some time coaching in sunny Southern California. Along with myself, the participants were GM Jeffery Xiong, IM Ruifeng Li, IM Daniel Gurevich, FM Joshua Sheng, FM Cameron Wheeler, FM Vignesh Panchanatham, and NM Craig Hilby. With an average rating of 2494, this was the strongest group of U.S. Chess School campers ever assembled for a week of training.

I have been fortunate over the past several years to be invited to many of these camps which are held all over the country in various locations several times a year. This one was one of my favorites since it focused on an area that I am looking to improve- opening play. Each day began with looking at the openings of a specific player. Everyone was given an ample amount of time to discuss the weaknesses that they are looking to improve in their opening play. GM Gustafsson is one of the world's foremost opening experts and used his expertise along with his vast private databases of lines to improve our opening play. Some of the other highlights were training games focusing on specific openings, a bullet tournament (won by yours truly), a blitz tournament (won by GM Xiong), as well as solving studies on the last day. I have included a sample study from the camp:



We were all extremely grateful to have multiple days of rigorous training and one-on-one guidance from a top-level coach.

These camps are funded by the generous chess benefactor Jim Roberts, who has played a major part in funding all of these training camps. We were also especially fortunate to have a great location at the American Chess Academy with plenty of space for both the students and several other local coaches such as Tatev Abrahamyan and Kostya Kavutskiy. It was especially serendipitous that the event was held nearby my current residence at UCLA since I cannot usually take the time away from my studies to attend these camps anymore. However, I thoroughly enjoyed attending once again not only for the top-notch instruction, but also for the great fun and camaraderie that is cultivated at each and every one of these camps!

Luke Harmon-Vellotti
International Chess Master & UCLA
Stamps Foundation Scholar '2017

Solution 1.f8=Q Rf4+ 2.Ke5 Rxf8 3.Nc4+ Kb5 4.Nd6+! Ka5 5.Ndb7+ Kb5 6.c4+! Kxc4 7.Nd6+ Kxc5 8.d4#

51st American Open

By James Woodward

The 51st Annual American Open was held over the Thanksgiving "weekend" November 26-29 at the Doubletree Hotel in Orange County. 261 players fought it out in 6 sections.

In the Open section, top seed and the #11 player in the U.S.A, GM Varuzhan Akobian tied for first with IM Dionisio Aldama with 6 1/2 out of 8 points. GM Akobian took top honors (the trophy!) on tiebreaks.

GM Varuzhan Akobian jw

Akobian chose the 4-day schedule while Aldama went with the 3-day. Both started off with 4 wins, then met in round 5 after the two schedules merged. That game ended in a draw. Aldama nosed ahead with a win against IM Ray Kaufman in round 6, while Akobian drew with Michael Brown. Round 7 saw a standing flip, as Akobian outplayed GM Sevillano for the full point while Aldama lost to Brown. Akobian drew quickly with GM Matamoros in the final round and Aldama won a long game with IM Bryant.

Michael Brown took clear 3rd with 6 points, IM Keaton Kiewra took 4th with 5.5 points and GM Carlos Matamoros 5th with 5 points. Top woman was Annie Wang with 4.5 points.

51st American Open
11.26.2015 E00
Round 2
Yanayt, Eugene -
Akobian, Varuzhan
Notes by Jack Peters

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4.Nf3 ....
The Catalan Opening.

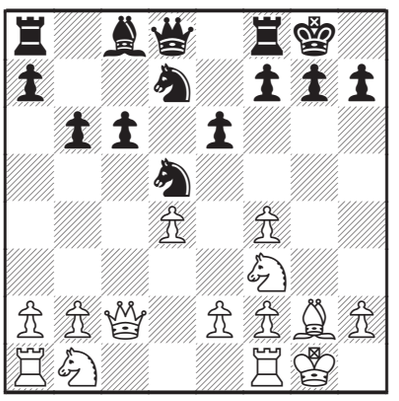
4...Bb4+ 5.Bd2 Bd6
Rare. Black usually chooses 5...Be7.

6.Bg2 c6 7.O-O O-O 8.Qc2 Nbd7
The Bishop at d2 is awkwardly placed because it prevents the natural Nb1-d2.

9.Bf4 ....
After 9.Nc3 dxc4, White cannot reply Nf3-d2, but 10.Rad1 may be all right. Another thought is 9.Rd1, hoping Black will make a committing move.

9...Bxf4 10.gxf4 b6 11.cxd5 ....
White should settle for equality with 11.Ne5 Bb7 12.Nc3.

11...Nxd5!?

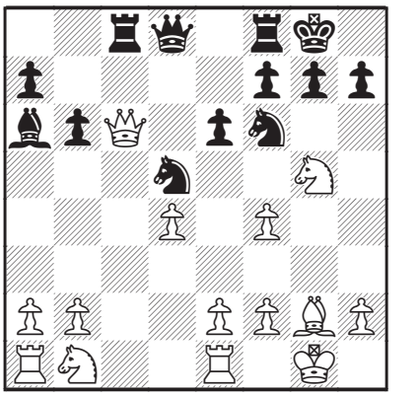


Black has no worries after 11...cxd5 12.Rc1 Bb7 13.Nbd2 Rc8 =, but Akobian's choice is more ambitious.

12.Ng5?! ....
Correct is 12.e3 Bb7 13.Nc3 when Black would probably prepare ...c6-c5 by 13...Nxc3 14.bxc3 Qc7 =. White avoids 12.Qxc6? Ba6 because he cannot defend both e2 and f4.

12...N7f6 13.Qxc6? Ba6 14.Re1 ....
White has played logically to snatch a pawn, but Akobian reveals a beautiful refutation.

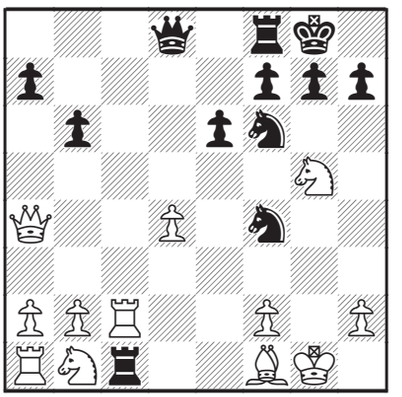
14...Rc8



Not 14...Nxf4?? 15.Qxa8 +/-.

15.Qa4 Bxe2!! 16.Rxe2 ....
Obviously the critical variation. Houdini suggests 16.Nc3 Bc4 17.Nh3 as the best defense, but White's position is in ruins after 17...Nxc3 18.bxc3 Bd5 -+.

16...Rc1+ 17.Bf1 Nxf4 18.Rc2 ....



If 18.Qb5, Black regains material

neatly by 18...Qd5 19.Qxd5 Nxe2+ 20.Kg2 Nf4+ 21.Kf3 N6xd5 -+.

18...Qd5! 19.Rxc1 Qxg5+ 20.Kh1 Nh3! 21.Bxh3 Qxc1+ 22.Kg2 Qxb2 0-1

51st American Open
11.27.2015 A46
Round 3
Kiewra- Keaton -
Akobian, Varuzhan
Notes by Jack Peters

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.Bg5 ....
The Torre Attack. Black chooses an unusual reply.

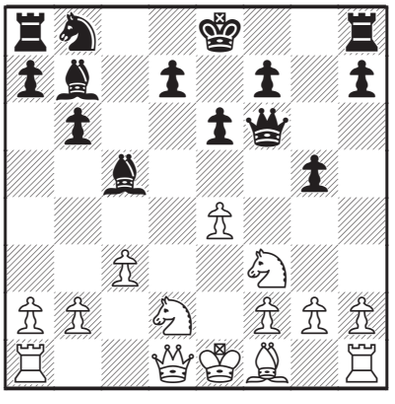
3...b6 4.Bxf6 ....
White could occupy the center at once with 4.e4 Bb7 5.Bd3,when Black would have to spend a move on 5...h6 to persuade White to trade Bishop for Knight.

4...Qxf6
In effect, White has lost a tempo.

5.e4 Bb7 6.Nbd2 ....
The effect of White's loss of time shows up in the variation 6.Bd3 c5 7.c3 Nc6 =+, when Black applies pressure to White's center.

6...c5 7.c3 cxd4 8.Nxd4 ....
White rejects the unpleasant 8.cxd4 Nc6 9.e5 Qg6=+.

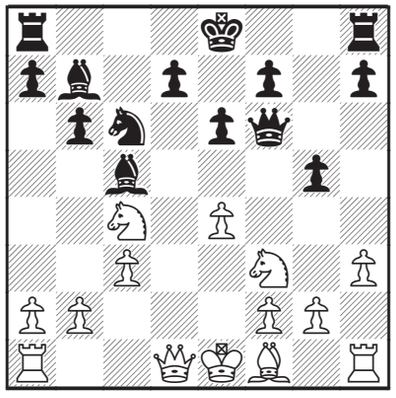
8...Bc5 9.N4f3 g5!?



Sharpest. Black presses his initiative while White's development lags. Simply 9...Nc6 10.Be2 O-O 11.O-O Rad8 =+, planning ...d7-d5, favors Black too.

10.h3 Nc6
White would parry 10...h5 by 11.e5 Qg7 12.Qe2, intending Nd2-e4 or Nd2-c4.

11.Nc4? ....



White had to try 11.Qe2 although 11...Ne5 =+ squelches e4-e5.

11...d5! -/+ 12.exd5 ....
Neither 12.Ncd2 d4-/+ nor 12.e5 Qf4-/+ saves White.

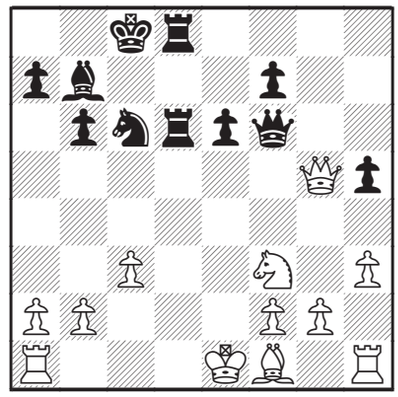
12...O-O-O
Houdini considers 12...exd5 even stronger. If 3.Qxd5 Qe7+ 14.Be2 Nb4 ! -/+, White must yield the exchange with 15.Qe5 as 15.Qd2? loses to 15... Bxf3 16.gxf3 Rd8.

13.d6 h5! 14.Qe2 ....
Black crushes 14.Qd2? by 14...b5! (White can survive 14...g4? 15.Qg5!) 15.Qxg5 Qxg5 16.Nxg5 bxc4 17.Nxf7 Bxf2+ 18.Kd2 Bg3 19.Nxd8 Rxd8 20.Bxc4 Rxd6+ 21.Kc2 Ne5 -+, when Black's extra piece will decide the game.

14...Bxd6 15.Nxd6+ Rxd6 16.Qe3 Rhd8! -/+
It might appear that White has escaped, but Black's initiative persists.

17.Qxg5? ....

see diagram

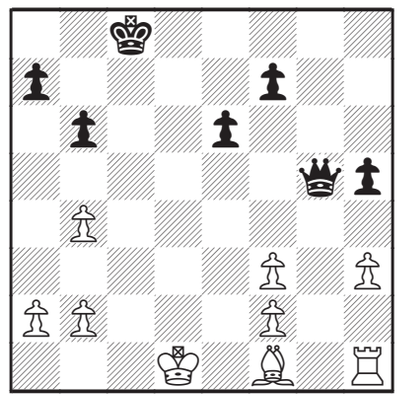


Allowing a spectacular finish. Sturdiest is 17.Be2 g4 18.Qg5, yet 18...Qxg5 19.Nxg5 Ne5 keeps White under pressure. He could end up in a miserable endgame after 20.hxg4 hxg4 21.f4 gxf3 22.Nxf3 Bxf3 23.gxf3 Nd3+ 24.Bxd3 Rxd3-/+.

17...Nb4!!
Threatening mate by 18...Nc2+ 19. Ke2 Ba6+.

18.cxb4 ....
White does not stop the threat by 18.Rc1 as Black continues, nevertheless, with 18...Nc2+! 19.Rxc2 Rd1+ 20.Ke2 Bxf3+ 21.gxf3 Qxg5 -+. White postpones material loss only for a moment by 18.Qc1 Nd3+ 19.Bxd3 Rxd3 -+.

18...Rd1+! 19.Rxd1 Rxd1+ 20.Kxd1 Bxf3+ 21.gxf3 Qxg5

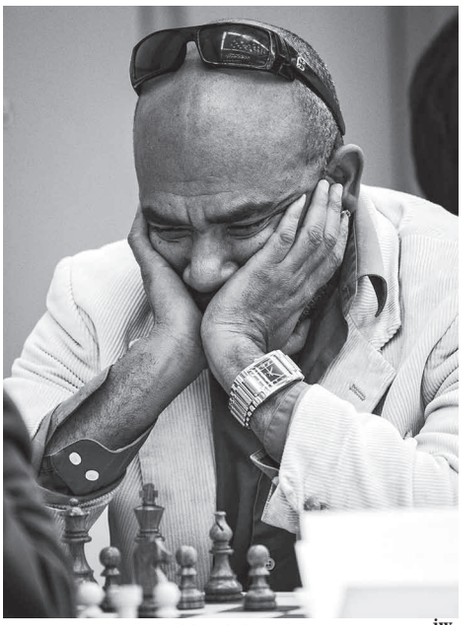


Winning. White must soon drop another pawn or two.

22.Ba6+ ....
Or 22.Be2 Qe5 -+, and the Queenside pawns fall.

22...Kc7 23.Ke2 Qe5+ 24.Kf1 b5! 0-1

Now the Bishop is doomed. Black may pick it off by 25...Kb6 26. Bc8 Qc7.



IM Dionisio Aldama jw

51st American Open
11.29.2015 C65
Round 8
Aldama, Dionisio -
Bryant, John Daniel

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 4.d3 d6 5.c3 Be7 6.O-O O-O 7.Nbd2 a6 8.Ba4 b5 9.Bc2 Re8 10.Re1 Bf8 11.a4 b4 12.d4 Rb8 13.d5 Ne7 14.cxb4 Rxb4 15.b3 c6 16.Ba3 Rb7 17.Nc4 Rd7 18.Bb4 Bb7 19.Ba5 Qb8 20.Nb6 Rc7 21.Nd2 cxd5 22.exd5 Rxc2 23.Qxc2 Nexd5 24.Nxd5 Nxd5 25.Ne4 Rc8 26.Qd2 Nf4 27.Rad1 d5 28.Ng3 d4 29.f3 Bd5 30.Ne2 Ne6 31.b4 Qb7 32.Rc1 Rb8 33.Rb1 Be7 34.Ng3 Bg5 35.Qd3 Nf4 36.Qd1 f6 37.b5 Ra8 38.Ne4 Bh6 39.Bd2 axb5 40.Rxb5 Qc6 41.Qb1 Bxe4 42.fxe4 Rxa4 43.Kh1 Ra8 44.Rc1 Qe6 45.Rb6 Qa2 46.Rb8+ Kf7 47.Rxa8 Qxa8 48.Qb3+ Kg6 49.Qg3+ Bg5 50.Bxf4 exf4 51.Qf3 Qa5 52.Rd1 Qc3 53.Qd3 f3 54.gxf3 Qxd3 55.Rxd3 Be3 56.Kg2 Kg5 57.Ra3 g6 58.Ra5+ Kh4 59.Rd5 h6 60.Rd6 Kg5 61.h4+ Kxh4 62.Rxf6 Kg5 63.e5 d3 64.Kf1 h5 65.Rf7 h4 66.e6 Bc5 67.e7 Bxe7 68.Rxe7 Kf4 69.Kf2 1-0

Michael Brown jw

51st American Open
11.29.2015 E92
Round 7
Brown, Michael -
Aldama, Dionisio

1.d4 d6 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.c4 g6 4.Nc3 Bg7 5.e4 O-O 6.Be2 e5 7.Be3 h6 8.d5 Ng4 9.Bd2 f5 10.exf5 gxf5 11.g3 e4 12.Nh4 Nxf2 13.Kxf2 f4 14.Kg2 f3+ 15.Nxf3 exf3+ 16.Bxf3 Nd7 17.Bg4 Ne5 18.Bxc8 Qxc8 19.Qe2 Qf5 20.Raf1 Qc2 21.Rxf8+ Rxf8 22.Bf4 Qxe2+ 23.Nxe2 Nxc4 24.Rc1 Re8 25.Kf3 Ne5+ 26.Bxe5 Rxe5 27.Rxc7 Rxd5 28.Rxb7 Rd3+ 29.Ke4 Rd2 30.Ke3 Rxb2 31.Rxa7 Be5 32.h4 Rb4 33.Kf3 Kf8 34.a4 Ke8 35.a5 Ra4 36.a6 Kd8 37.h5 Kc8 38.Nf4 Ra3+ 39.Kg4 Bd4 40.Rh7 Rxa6 41.Rxh6 Kd7 42.Rh7+ Ke8 43.Ne6 Bb6 44.Rb7 Ra4+ 45.Kf5 Be3 46.Kf6 1-0

51st American Open
11.28.2015 A46
Round 6
Kiewra, Keaton - Hong, Andrew

1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 e6 3.Nf3 h6 4.Bh4 c5 5.e3 Nc6 6.c3 Be7 7.Nbd2 d5 8.Bd3 O-O 9.dxc5 Bxc5 10.Qe2 Be7 11.O-O Bd7 12.Rad1 Qb6 13.b4 Rfd8 14.b5 Na5 15.Ne5 Qc7 16.Nxd7 Rxd7 17.Rc1 Rad8 18.Rfd1 Nc4 19.Bc2 Nxd2 20.Rxd2 Rc8 21.Bg3 Bd6 22.Bd3 Bxg3 23.hxg3 Qa5 24.Rdc2 Rdc7 25.c4 dxc4 26.Bxc4 Qb6 27.g4 Ne4 28.Qd1 Qd6 29.Qe2 Qa3 30.Qd1 Qd6 31.Qe1 Qe5 32.Bd3 Rxc2 33.Rxc2 Rd8 34.Be2 Kh7 35.Qc1 Rd7 36.Rc4 Nd6 37.Rd4 Qf6 38.Qc5 Qd8 39.Qxa7 Qc7 40.Qa3 Ne8 41.Qd3+ f5 42.Rxd7 Qc1+ 43.Bf1 Nf6 44.gxf5 Nxd7 45.fxe6+ g6 46.Qxd7+ Kh8 47.Qe8+ Kh7 48.Qf7+ Kh8 49.e7 1-0

IM Keaton Kiewra jw

The ***U2200*** section was won by Arman Baradaran with a score of 6.5/8. Hot on his heels with 6 points was Gabriel Sam. Tied for 3rd thru 8th with 5.5 points were Daniel Lin, Alex Costello, Kenneth Odeh, Derek Zhang, Anthony Ge and Rachel Eng.

51st American Open
11.26.2015 D08
Round 2
Baradaran, Arman -
Gandhi, Shyam

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 d4 4.Nf3 Nc6 5.Nbd2 Nge7 6.Nb3 Nf5 7.Bg5 Qd7 8.h3 h6 9.Bf4 a5 10.g4 a4 11.Nc1 Nfe7 12.Nd3 Ng6 13.Bg3 h5 14.gxh5 Rxh5 15.Bg2 Nce7 16.e6 Qxe6 17.Nxd4 Qxc4 18.e3

Rh8 19.Rc1 Qxa2 20.Rc2 Nf5 21.b4 Qa3 22.Nb5 Bxb4+ 23.Ke2 Qb3 24.Nxc7+ Ke7 25.Nxb4 Rd8 26.Nbd5+ Kf8 27.Nxa8 b6 28.Nac7 a3 29.Qd3 Qa4 30.Nxb6 Rxd3 31.Nxa4 Rd8 32.Rd1 Rxd1 33.Kxd1 Bd7 34.Nb6 Be6 35.Nxe6+ fxe6 36.Be4 1-0

Arman Baradaran jw

Gabriel Sam jw

The ***U2000*** section had Alex Silvestre and Queena Deng tied for first with 6.5/8 scores. 3rd-4th were Robert Shlyakhtenko and Mher Mikayelyan with 6/8.

Alex Silvestre jw

Queena Deng jw

51st American Open
11.29.2015 D12
Round 8
Rivera, Louie -
Shlyakhtenko, Robert

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.e3 Nf6 4.Nc3 Bf5 5.Nf3 e6 6.Bd3 Bxd3 7.Qxd3 Nbd7 8.cxd5 cxd5 9.O-O Bd6

Robert Shlyakhtenko jw

Mher Mikayelyan jw

10.Nb5 Be7 11.Bd2 a6 12.Nc3 O-O 13.h3 b5 14.a3 Rc8 15.Na2 Qb6 16.Bb4 Bxb4 17.Nxb4 a5 18.Na2 Ne4 19.Nd2 Ndf6 20.Nxe4 Nxe4 21.Rac1 b4 22.axb4 axb4 23.f3 Ng3 24.Rfe1 g6 25.Kf2 Nf5 26.Qb3 Rb8 27.Rc5 Qd6 28.f4 Qe7 29.g3 Nd6 30.Rc2 f6 31.Kg2 Ne4 32.Nc1 Qd6 33.Ree2 g5 34.Nd3 gxf4 35.exf4 Kh8 36.Kf3 Rg8 37.Rg2 Qa6 38.g4 Rgc8 39.Rce2 Rc3 40.bxc3 Qxd3+ 0-1

The ***U1800*** section was won by Jaren Huang with 6.5/8. 2nd-4th with 6/8 scores were Gabriella Kay, Dioniver Medrano and Pio Reyes.

Jaren Huang jw

Gabriella Kay jw

Pio Reyes jw

Dioniver Medrano jw

51st American Open
11.26.2015 B12
Round 1
Medrano, Dioniver -
Harbone, Anthony

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.Nf3 h6 5.Be2 e6 6.O-O Nd7 7.c3 a6 8.a3 c5 9.b4 c4 10.Nbd2 b5 11.Re1 Nb6 12.Nf1 Rc8 13.Bd2 Ne7 14.h3 Na4 15.Qc1 Bh7 16.Bd1 Nb6 17.Ne3 Bd3 18.a4 Ra8 19.Qb2 Nc6 20.Nh2 Be7 21.g3 O-O 22.f4 f6 23.exf6 Bxf6 24.Neg4 Bf5 25.a5 Nc8 26.Bf3 Nd6 27.Nf2 Qd7 28.Nhg4 Bxg4 29.Nxg4 Nf7 30.Re2 Nfd8 31.Rae1 Qa7 32.Nxf6+ Rxf6 33.Kg2 Qf7 34.Qc1 Ne7 35.g4 Rg6 36.Kh2 Ra7 37.g5 Nf5 38.Bh5 Nh4 39.Rf1 Qf5 40.Qe1 hxg5 41.Bxg6 Qxg6 42.fxg5 Qh5 43.Ref2 Nf5 44.Rg2 g6 45.Rxf5 gxf5 46.g6 Rg7 47.Qg3 e5 48.Qxe5 Rxg6 49.Qe8+ Kh7 50.Rxg6 Qxg6 51.Qxd8 Qh5 52.Qe7+ Kg8 53.Qg5+ Qxg5 54.Bxg5 Kg7 55.Kg3 Kg6 56.Kf4 Kh5 57.Bd8 1-0

The ***U1600*** section was won by Henry Romero with a 7/8 score. 2nd-3rd were Dylan Gould and Jonathan Chen.

The ***U1400*** section saw Jasmine Yang easily pick up first place with a 7/8 result, losing only to 2nd place winner Naren Krishnan in the final round, who finished a half point behind at 6.5/8. 3rd-4th with 6/8 were Henry Ortiz and Donald Yan.

Jasmine Yang jw

jw

51st American Open
11.29.2015 E99
Round 7
Yanayt, Eugene -
Hong, Andrew

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 O-O 6.Be2 e5 7.O-O Nc6 8.d5 Ne7 9.Ne1 Nd7 10.Be3 f5 11.f3 f4 12.Bf2 g5 13.a4 a5 14.Nd3 b6 15.b4 axb4 16.Nxb4 Nf6 17.Nd3 h5 18.Be1 Ng6 19.Nf2 Rf7 20.h3 Bh6 21.a5 Rxa5 22.Rxa5 bxa5 23.Nb5 Rg7 24.Bxa5 Nh4 25.c5 Kh7 26.Nxd6 g4 27.fxg4 hxg4 28.hxg4 Bxg4 29.Nxg4 Nxg4 30.Bxg4 Qg8 31.Nf5 Rxg4 32.Nxh4 Rxh4 33.Be1 Rg4 34.Qf3 Rg6 35.Bf2 Qc8 36.Rd1 Qd7 37.Rd3 Kg7 38.c6 Qd6 39.Qh3 Kf7 40.Rb3 Bf8 41.Rb8 Rg8 42.Qf5+ Kg7 43.Re8 Kh8 44.Re6 Qd8 45.Qh5+ Kg7 46.Qxe5+ Kf7 47.Qh5+ Kg7 48.Bd4+ 1-0

51st American Open
11.29.2015 D00
Round 7
Creger, Leo -
Heredia, Carla

1.d4 d5 2.Bg5 Nf6 3.Bxf6 gxf6 4.e3 Qd6 5.c4 dxc4 6.Qa4+ Nc6 7.Nc3 Qb4 8.Qxb4 Nxb4 9.Kd2 Rg8 10.g3 Be6 11.a3 Na6 12.Nge2 Bh6 13.f4 f5 14.d5 Rd8 15.Nd4 Rxd5 16.Nxd5 Bxd5 17.Rg1 Nc5 18.Rc1 Ne4+ 19.Ke1 Nd6 20.Bg2 e6 21.Bxd5 exd5 22.Ke2 Bg7 23.Rc2 Bxd4 24.exd4 Kd7 25.Kf3 Re8 26.Re2 Re4 27.Rxe4 fxe4+ 28.Kg4 Ke6 29.Kg5 Nf5 30.g4 Nxd4 31.f5+ Ke5 32.Kh6 Nf3 33.Rg2 d4 34.Kg7 d3 35.Kxf7 e3 36.g5 d2 37.g6 hxg6 38.fxg6 d1=Q 39.g7 Qd7+ 40.Kg8 Qe8+ 41.Kh7 Qh5+ 0-1

51st American Open
11.26.2015 B40
Round 1
Clarke, Brandon -
Kiewra, Keaton

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.c3 Nf6 4.d3 Nc6 5.Nbd2 d5 6.g3 Be7 7.Bg2 O-O 8.O-O b6 9.e5 Nd7 10.Re1 Ba6 11.Nf1 b5 12.a3 Qb6 13.h4 b4 14.N1h2 bxc3 15.bxc3 Rab8 16.Ng4 Qb3 17.Qd2 Na5 18.Ng5 Qa4 19.Be4 Nb3 20.Bxh7+ Kh8 21.Qd1 Bxg5 22.hxg5 Kxh7 23.Kg2 Rh8 24.Nf6+ Kg6 25.f4 d4 26.g4 gxf6 27.f5+ Kg7 28.exf6+ Kf8 29.fxe6 Qc6+ 30.Kg3 fxe6 31.Bf4 e5 32.Rxe5 Nxe5 33.Bxe5 Qe6 34.Qe1 Nxa1 35.g6 Rg8 36.g7+ Kf7 37.Kf4 Rbe8 38.cxd4 cxd4 39.g5 0-1

51st American Open
11.26.2015 C52
Round 1
Mousseri, Daniel -
Bryant, John Daniel

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.b4 Bxb4 5.c3 Ba5 6.d4 b5 7.Bxb5 Nxd4 8.Nxd4 exd4 9.Qxd4 Qf6 10.O-O Bb6 11.Qd3 Qg6 12.Ba3 Nf6 13.Nd2 Bb7 14.Rae1 O-O-O 15.Be7 Rdg8 16.Bxf6 gxf6 17.Bxd7+ Kb8 18.Bh3 f5 19.Kh1 Rd8 20.Qc2 fxe4 21.Nxe4 Ba6 22.c4 Rd4 23.Qb2 Bxc4 24.Nc5 Rhd8 25.Nb3 Rh4 26.Rd1 Rg8 27.Qc3 Bxf1 28.Rxf1 Rd8 29.Nc5 Bxc5 30.Qxc5 Qd3 31.Re1 Rxh3 32.gxh3 Qf3+ 33.Kg1 Rg8+ 34.Kf1 Qh1+ 0-1

51st American Open
11.27.2015 E73
Round 1
Nasri, Amin -
Aldama, Dioniso

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 O-O 5.Be2 d6 6.Bg5 h6 7.Be3 c5 8.dxc5 Qa5 9.Bd2 Qxc5 10.Nf3 Qc7 11.O-O b6 12.Be3 Bb7 13.Nd2 Nbd7 14.Rc1 Rac8 15.b4 Qb8 16.f3 e6 17.Qb3 Rfe8 18.f4 a6 19.Bf3 Bc6 20.Bf2 e5 21.g3 b5 22.cxb5 axb5 23.Nd5 Bxd5 24.exd5 e4 25.Be2 Qb7 26.Bd4 Rxc1 27.Rxc1 Nxd5 28.Bxg7 Kxg7 29.Qb2+ N7f6 30.Qd4 e3 31.Nb3 Re4 32.Qd3 Rxb4 33.Bf3 Nxf4 34.Qxe3 N4d5 35.Qd2 Qb6+ 36.Kh1 Qe3 37.Qxe3 Nxe3 38.Re1 Nf5 39.Rd1 h5 0-1

51st American Open
11.26.2015 E12
Round 2
Akobian, Varuzhan -
Viswanadha, Kesav

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.a3 Bb7 5.Nc3 d5 6.cxd5 Nxd5 7.e3 Be7 8.Bb5+ c6 9.Bd3 O-O 10.Qc2 h6 11.e4 Nxc3 12.bxc3 c5 13.O-O Qc8 14.Qe2 Ba6 15.Rd1 Bxd3 16.Rxd3 Nd7 17.Ne1 cxd4 18.cxd4 Qd8 19.e5 Bg5 20.Rg3 Bxc1 21.Rxc1 Rc8 22.Rd1 Qe7 23.Nd3 Kh8 24.Nf4 Rg8 25.Nh5 Nf8 26.d5 Ng6 27.d6 Qh4 28.d7 Rcd8 29.f4 Qe7 30.Rgd3 Qc5+ 31.Kh1 Ne7 32.Qd2 Qc6 33.Ng3 Nd5 34.Rxd5 exd5 35.Qxd5 Qa4 36.f5 Qxa3 37.Qxf7 Rgf8 38.Qd5 a5 39.e6 a4 40.Ne4 Kh7 41.h3 Qb4 42.Nd6 Rg8 43.e7 1-0

jw

Here and There

Local News and Events Around the Southland

*With "***Here and There***" in your subject line, please send your club or tournament news and notices to the editor at:* RankAndFileEditor@gmail.com.

La Palma Chess Club

With an undefeated score of 6-1, Shyam Gandhi won La Palma Chess Club's 1st annual W. Leigh Hunt Memorial.

The 60-player event held at La Palma's Central Park ended October 16. Tied at second were Wan Kim and Eren Karadayi with a score of 5½-1½.

Other prizewinners were Luke Cheng and Chris Keefe tied for best A; Ryan Schmitt, Eric Lu, Yoshio Dupree, Leonard Vu, and Reagan Pearl tied for best B; Steve Acevedo won best C; and Paul Jia, Tony Gray, Michael Redden, Teddy Adams, and Andy Gu tied for best D or lower.

Rohan Nair won the biggest upset prize for his 463 point upset of Alan Whiteman. Best performance by a player under 1500 rating went to Ria Dawar for her 1463 performance. And, George Newell won the best game prize (as judged by IM Jack Peters) for his win over Dawar.

See the club's website at www.lapalmachess.com for wall charts, games, pictures and a schedule of events.

- Chris Roberts

San Diego Chess Club

In the last Rank and File I failed to report on the Wednesday events at the club, so now I will briefly recap the last 6 months.

In the Joel Bachelor Open, Peter Hodges took First Place by 1 ½ points, way ahead of the 4 players trailing him. There were 52 players in all and we used a McMahon Swiss pairing system. Hector Gonzalez won BU2000, with 5 players just a half a point behind him. Steve Perry and Haroutyun Bursalyan tied for BU1800. Morgan Fox won BU1600 and Juvi Allen tied with Jachin Tyrell for BU1400. In June there were 46 players at the Robert Draper Open (we name our events after current club members of long standing), NM Todd Smith won the Open Section and Raoul Crisologo was BU2200. There was a 3-way tie in the Premier Section, between Ramil Macaspac, Jorge Paz and Chuck Ensey for BU2000. Tami Posada won BU1800, trailed by Ming Lu and Eliza Eggert.

We also had a Doubleheader Premier Section with two games at G/45 per night with alternating colors against the same opponent. Buddy Morris won BU2000 with 8 points, and Haroutyun Bursalyan was 2nd U1800 with 7. Robert Henderson won BU1800 with 5 ½. In the Doubleheader Booster Section, it was Morgan Fox who clinched BU1600 with 7, trailed by Bruce Gall with 6 ½. Jim Harrell scored 6 points to win BU1400.

In July and August there were 46 players again in the Morgan Fox Open. Todd Smith scored a perfect 6-0 to win the Open Section, Peter Hodges was BU2200 and Aaron Wooten was 2nd U2200. Ramil Macaspac claimed BU2100 and Chuck Ensey won BU2000. In the U1900 Section, Fawsi Jose Murra won by ½ a point over second place finishers Serge Yusim, Pejman Sagart and Eliza Eggert. The U1700 Section featured a 3-way tied between Rocio Murra, Erik Marquis and Robert Henderson. In the U1500 Section, Bruce Gall dominated with 5 points, while Jim Harrell and Jachin Tyrell came in with 3 ½ each. Patrick Edwards was BU1200.

In August and September, 56 players competed in the Shaun Sweitzer Shootout. David Hart was clear First Place, ½ point ahead of his good friend Todd Smith. 4 others trailed by a ½ a point: Wooten, Hodges, Mathe and Baluran. There was a 3-way tie for BU2000 between Ben Keltner, Allan Virtue and Dyane Frietag. Ted Roth was 4th and 10 others tied for 5th in the large contingent of Class A players. Randall Fair and Santiago Rubio-Fernaz tied to BU1800, followed by Damani Fair and William Wijaya. There was a 5-way tied for BU1600 between Mark Lawless, David Palmer, Bruce Gall, Roger Wathen and Ron Sanzone. Jim Harrell was BU1400 and Patrick Edwards BU1200.

Finally, in the Robert Henderson Open in October and November, 54 players (we don't count house players, just paid entrants, and the entry fee is $25) battled in 2 sections. David Hart won First Place, Todd Smith Second Place and Aaron Wooten BU2200. New player Tzvi Bar won BU2000 and 4 players tied for BU1900: Fawsi Jose Murra, Edgar Lopez, Shaun Sweitzer and Randall Fair. In the Premier (U1800) Section, Bruce Gall scored a surprising 6 straight wins to take clear First Place and boosted his rating over 300 points. And he had no computer assistance, we made sure of that! Roberto Mercado was Second Place and Third Place was split between Robert Draper, Thomas Webb and Damani Fair. BU1600 was split between Juvi Allen, David Palmer and Jake Coulston, while BU1400 was shared between Karen Kaufman, Patrick Edwards and Mehul Sheth.

I won't go into all the Gambito Open winners, over the last few months,

you can see them on our blog page at the sandiegochessclub.com website, but I will mention that on November 14, Gambito #726 we had an exceptionally strong event with 6 players over 2300! IM Cyrus Lakdawala, IM Dionisio Aldama, Amin Nasri from Iran, Carlos Lacunza from Spain, plus local masters Stevan Djordjevic, Ali Morshedi and Bruce Baker were the top players, I think we may have had a few stronger fields in the past, but it has been quite a while. Dionisio came out on top this time and Cyrus had to settle for Second Place. Amin Nasri, Carlos Lacunza and Leonard Sussman tied for BU2400. Datris Robinson won the Premier Section (U2000), Jason Arbeiter and Tommy Wen won 2nd U2000 and BU1800, respectively. Kai Chen won the Reserve Section (U1600), and there were 31 players in all, a pretty good turnout for mid-November.

The San Diego Chess Club is really looking forward to getting back to our refurbished building in Balboa Park sometime early next year, but the exact date has not been determined yet. We have enjoyed playing in our two alternate sites, the Music Association on Morena Blvd for Wednesday nights and the Consulate Hotel on Nimitz Blvd for the Saturday Gambito Opens, but really there is no place like home and we are all quite homesick.

One more thing we are looking forward to early next year is the 2nd annual Dreaming King Open over Martin Luther King weekend in mid-January. See the scchess.com website for details, advance entries and convenient online sign-up options. Sections are Open, U2100, U1900, U1700 and U1500 and the location is the beautiful Courtyard Marriott at Liberty Station near the San Diego Airport, same as last year and the previous three Recession Buster Opens. The prize fund is a guaranteed $13,000 this year. I hope to see you there!

- Chuck Ensey

SANTA MONICA BAY CHESS CLUB (310) 827-2789
11555 National Blvd. (@ Federal Ave.)
West Los Angeles

Pasadena Chess Club

The summer extravaganza Liberty Open drew 82 players. Young Jeffrey Chou topped the field with 6½ of 8, downing strong Expert Ray Armagnac in the last round. Master Ashok Ramadoss and Experts Alex Xie and Tony Kukavica (top U2100) split second place with 6; Xie crossed 2200 for the first time. U2000 honors were split among Patrick Giles, Stephanie Shao, Victor Veturi, and Daniel Manahan; Cory Chen was best U1900; and Aaron Sun topped the U1700 players. Tommy Wen was best U1600; Greg Villar and Philip Leung split U1400 laurels; Grace Liang was top U1200; and Armen Hovasapian had the best Unrated result. Qize Li racked up the most upset points.

Eighty-four players turned out for the San Gabriel Valley Open. Axel Muller and Ron Jabali scored 5-1 in the first section (Muller had two byes while Jabali yielded a draw to Jeff Chou and had one bye). Chou, Ray Armagnac, and Larry Stevens at 4½ split U2100 honors. Oscar Ortiz and Cory Chen tied for best U2000; Arturo Armagnac and Nicholas Mendez for top U1800; Teddie Wen was best U1700; and Bowen Liu, Brian Sheldon, and Eric Woo tied for top U1600. Arman Hovasapian dominated Section Two of this tournament with 5 points. Edmond Wen was best U1400; Andrew Li U1300; and Maxwell Li (who also had the most upset points) was top U1100.

Turnout inched up again to 86 in the Crown City Open. Muller (unable to play the last round because of illness), Jabali, Stevens, Ray Armagnac, and Alex Severino (top U2100) split first with 4-1 in Section 1. Mendez, Phil Chase, and Jason Gurtovoy were equal first U1900; Neil Hultgren, Ryan Yang, Alex Futterer, and Jason McKeen tied for top U1800. Hovasapian was best U1600. The second section also had a five-way tie: Leung, Ryan Shirtz, Qize Li, Alex Chen, and Kevin Zhang (U1400). Jason Zhang was best U1200, and Derek Jiang first U1000. Alex Bravo won best Unrated, and Grace Liang notched 1016 upset points.

The club will hold the Dr. Richard Lewis Memorial January 2 through February 6, with six rounds in two sections, 40/90 and SD/30. Club membership ($20,juniors $10) required, $15 entry fee,85% returned in prizes. The club meets at 7 pm each Friday at the Boys and Girls Club, 3230 East Del Mar. Its website, http://www.tim-thompson.com/pasadena.html, includes the full annual schedule and a catalogue of the hundreds of books in its lending library. Direct questions to Randy Hough: randallhough@gmail.com, (626) 282-7412.

-Randy Hough

Lancaster
The AV Chess House, 3710 Neola Way, hosts two chess clubs. The Kids Chess Club (for grades K-8) meets 5:15 pm. to 6:45 p.m. Fridays, and the Check Chess Club (for ages 15 and up) meets 3:30 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. Fridays. Rated and non-rated tournaments on most weekends, instruction, newsletter. Contact Daa Mahowald at daa@mahowald.org.
Website: chess4.us

Temecula Chess Club
27403 Inez Road, Suite 213
Temecula, CA 92591
951.327.1000
info@temeculachess.com

USCF rated tournament games every Tuesday evening, starting at 7 p.m.

Upcoming Events in Southern California

***** Please see uschess.org for the latest info and complete TLA for each event. *****
See also adult TLAs at
SCchess.com/calendar.html
and Scholastic TLAs at
SCchess.com/calendar_kids.html

Jan. 16-18, 2016
Dreaming King Open
GPP: 150, FIDE Rated
San Diego.
Format: 6-SS, 5 Sections, G/100 +30
(2-day schedule rds. 1 - 3 are G/45 d5)
Site: Marriott San Diego Airport/Liberty Station, 2592 Lanning Rd., San Diego, CA 92106.
Prizes: $$13,000 Guaranteed prize fund.
Open Section
(FIDE rated except for 3 fast games in the 2- day): $1,800-1,300-900-600-400-200, U2300 $800-500.
U2100, U1900, U1700 Sections, all $800-500-300-200,
U1500 Section:
$300-200, BU1300 $300-150, BU1100 $100,
Book Prize for Best Unr in each section.
Plus Best Game Prize: $50.

Ratings:
Dec. official rating list will be used.

Fines: $5 for ringing cell phone violations and $25 for forfeits at TD discretion; also no headsets or earbuds, etc.

Registration:
3-day: 8:30 - 9:30 AM on Sat,
2-day: 8 - 9 AM on Sunday.

Schedule:
Rds.: 3 day: 10 AM & 4 PM all 3 days.
2- day: 9:30 AM, 11:30, 1:30 PM & 4:00 PM (merged) on Sunday, then 10 AM & 4 PM on Monday (Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday).

EF: $90 if received by 11/30/15 (Early Bird Special), or $100 between 12/01/15 and 1/08/16, $120 after 1/08/16 and $140 late registration at door on 1/16/16. No credit cards at door, checks or cash only.

Special rate of only $75 if U1500 or unrated. Special rate for GMs, WGMs, IMs and WIMs: $20. Re-entry from 3-day to 2-day: $75, for players rated U2300 only. SCCF membership req, ($18 Adult, $13 Jr, or $3 for Jr w/o mag) for all So Cal residents.

Byes: Two byes allowed, but must be requested at least 1 hour before rd. Sorry, no last round byes.

Ent: SDCC, PO Box 120162, San Diego, CA 92112 or enter online at www.scchess.com.
Info: Call Chuck Ensey at 858.432.8006, or email at chucnglo@aol.com

Hotel Rates: Special rate of only $129 (with free parking!) if booked by 1/05/16, book early as rates will go up and rooms will definitely sell out (only 200 rooms), so it is critical to book EARLY for this great hotel.

Scholastic: Also separate one day Scholastic event on 1/18, $15 EF, 5 rounds G/30 d5, starts at 10 AM, register 9 to 9:50 AM.

State Championship Qualifier. ♜

Late breaking news!

The National K-12 Grade Championships in Orlando, FL. over December 4-6, 2015 results.

9th Grade Championship:
Albert Lu tied for first (3-way) with 6/7.

8th Grade Championship:
Danial Asaria took first with 6.5/7.

6th Grade Championship:
Alex Costello tied for 2nd (6-way) with 6/7.

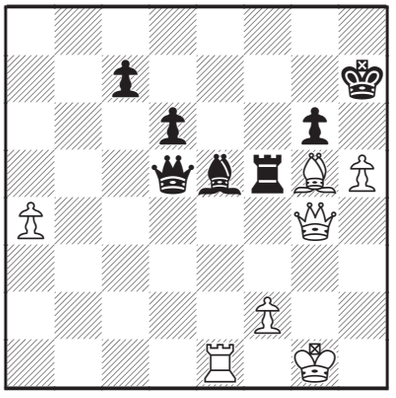
2nd Grade Championship:
Jonathan Chen took first outright with a perfect 7/7 score.
Nikhil Parvathaneni tied for 3rd (6-way) with 6/7.

Blitz K-6:
Alex Costello tied for first (2-way) with a 10.5/12 score.

Advertising Rates: Full page $80, ½-page $45, ¼-page $25, 1/8 page $15, back cover (¾-page) $80. Email PDF and original word files, hi-res photos, and graphics etc. Flyer insert $50 (advertiser supplies flyers). 50% discount for events requiring SCCF membership. Payment should be sent to the Treasurer at 1110 E.Philadelphia St Apt 9211, Ontario CA 91761. Ads should be emailed to the Editor, and flyers sent to the Publisher (addresses on p. 3). SCCF reserves the right to reject any advertising.

Final Points

We hope you enjoyed this issue. Until next time, here is another quiz. We went back 50 and 100 years to add positions to those from recent tournaments. So please keep submitting those scoresheets, or take a smartphone photo and email it to RankAndFileEditor@gmail.com. See page 2 for solutions. - Ed.



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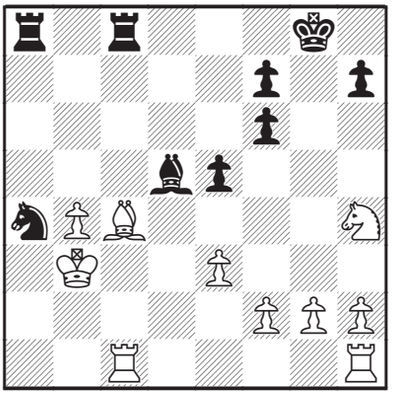

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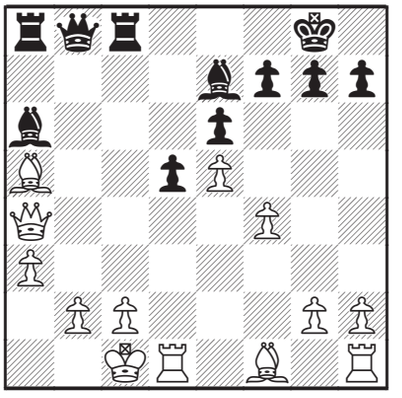

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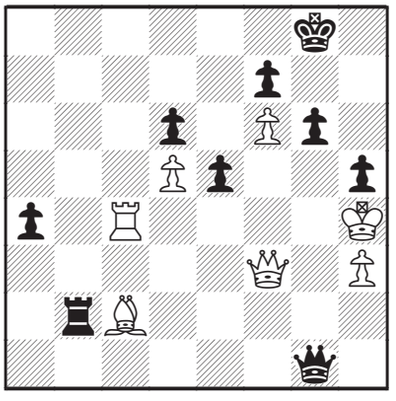

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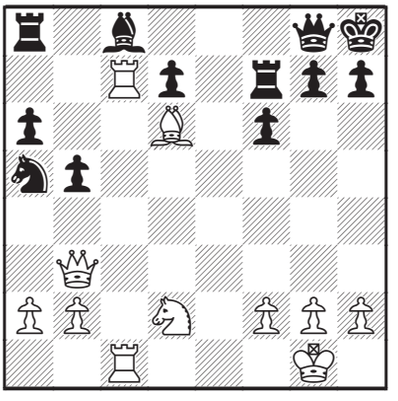

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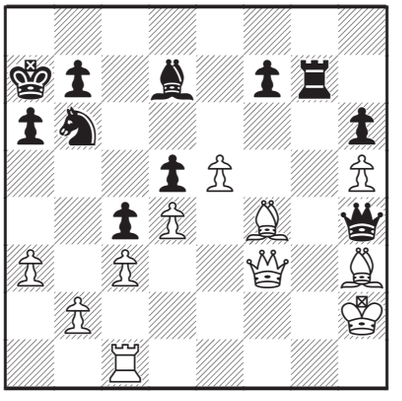

6. White to Play

Solutions to
Inside Moves

From the page 3.

1. 1... d2+ 2. Kf1 Qxd1+. Pau-Cambon, 51st American Open.

2. 1... Nh3 2. Rg2 Nxf4 3. Rg1 Nh5 4. Ne2 Bxe2 and the N on g3 falls. Sagart - Cambon, 51st American Open.

3. 1.... Nxf2+ ends the game quickly. Fritchle - Jackson, LPCC W. Leigh Hunt Memorial, 2015.

4. 1. Bh5+! g6 2. Nxg6 Nd3+ (avoiding 2...hxg6 3. Bxg6+ Ke7 4. Bxc5#) 3. Ke2 hxg6 4. Bxg6+ Ke7 Bxd3 +- and wins Cheng - Schmitt, LPCC W. Leigh Hunt Memorial, 2015.

5. 1... Be3! 2. Qd1 Nxg2+ 3. Ke2 Nd4+ 4. Nxd4 Rf2# Whiteman - Muilenburg, LPCC W. Leigh Hunt Memorial, 2015.

6. 1. Qh8+! Kxh8 2. Nxf7+ Ng7 3. Nxg5 simplifies and wins. Karjakin, Sergey - Andreikin, Dmitry, FIDE World Chess Cup 2015.

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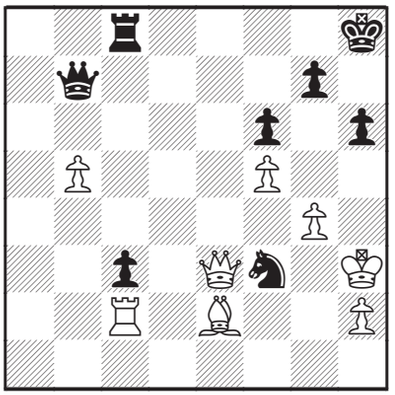

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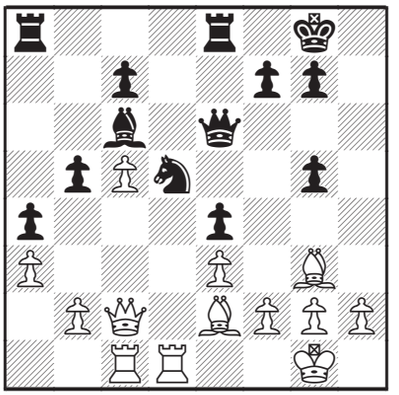

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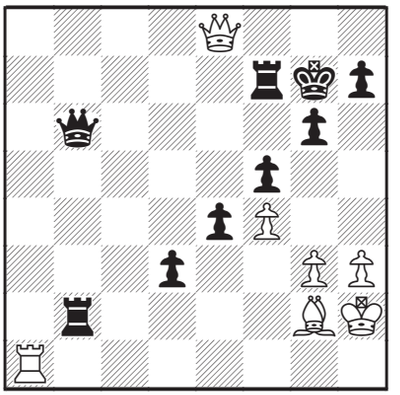

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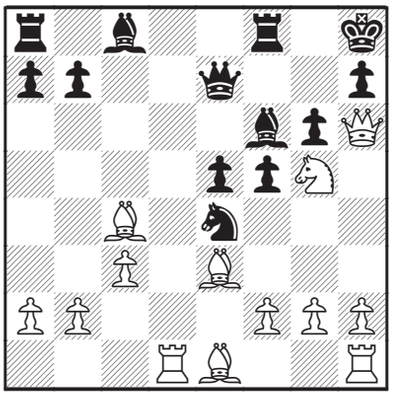

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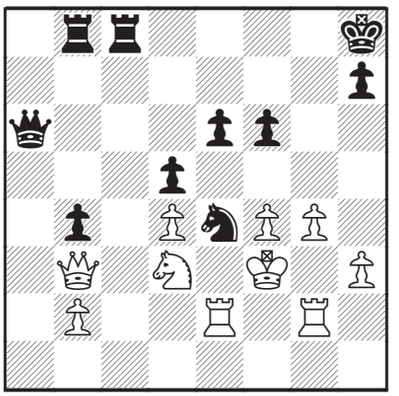

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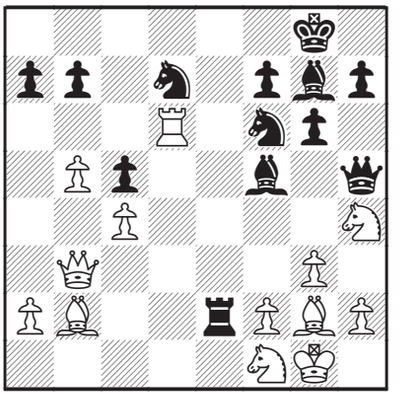

6. Black to Play

See page 23 for solutions.